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WORKS

OF

WILLIAM DELL,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AND

MASTER OF GONVIL AND CAIUS

COLLEGE,

IN CAMBRIDGE.

NINE-PARTNERS:
State of New York.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

WE doubt not it would be acceptable to the reader, to receive some information concerning the Author of these ensuing excellent treatises; but as very little is met with to assist us in this respect, we must be contented with saying, that though the transactions of his life are in a great measure unknown to us, his writings are a monument to his praise, which shew the good understanding he had received in the weighty concerns of life and salvation.

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CHRIST'S SPIRIT

A

CHRISTIAN'S STRENGTH,

OR A PLAIN DISCOVERY OF THE MIGHTY AND INVINCIBLE POWER THAT ALL BELIEVERS RECEIVE THROUGH THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

FIRST HELD FORTH IN TWO SERMONS

On *Acts* i. 8.

AND AFTER PUBLISHED FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND USE OF THOSE THAT ARE SPIRITUAL, ANNO 1645.

BY WILLIAM DELL,

Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, at Yelden, in the county of Bedford.

1 Cor. iv. 19, 20.

I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power.

For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

2 Tim. iii. 5.

Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power of it; from such turn away.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LADY ELIZABETH,

COUNTESS OF BULLINBROOK.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

THE *form of godliness* is very common in these days of ours; but *the power* of it is very rare. How few persons shall we find in the visible church, who live and act in the strength of God? But generally, men do whatever they do in their own strength; and that not only in human things, but in divine. How seldom do we see, either in ministers or Christians, in the discharge of their duties in their several places, more than the power of men? The greatest part by far, not only of those who are called Christians, but also of forward professors, being ignorant, what it is *to be strengthened with might in the inner man, according to the glorious power of the great God.* How little is there, among all our plenty, of that preaching which is not in the plausible words of man's wisdom, but *in the demonstration of the Spirit, and power?* How few congregations, among the many that are in the kingdom, are gathered together in the spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ? How few of those Christians are there, in whom is *the exceeding greatness of God's power*, together with the effectual working of it? But *the form of godli-*

ness is now become almost *the covering of all flesh;* and in these days of light and knowledge, it is accounted by all, that are not downright atheists, a great shame not to *seem* to be religious. And when men, and families, and congregations, are gotten into this *form*, they think themselves both safe and happy, as being near the suburbs of the kingdom of God, and close neighbours to the saints. And this form of godliness, as it is of very easy compliance with flesh and blood, in this particular, in that according to this, men only make their actions new, retaining still their old natures; so it is also of great credit and esteem with carnal gospellers. But *the spiritual man judgeth all things, and yet he himself is judged of no man:* and he, being partaker of the power of God himself, can in some measure discern, both the presence and the want of it in others; both which he knows in his own experience.

Now this form of godliness is, when men are godly without God, and anointed without Christ, and regenerate, *not having the Spirit;* that is, when they have a semblance of holiness, but not the thing itself: a semblance of grace, retaining their old natures. And such Christians as these perform spiritual duties with natural strength, heavenly duties with earthly strength, the works of God with the power of men. In the religion of these men, there is the outward duty done, and it may be, very speciously and plausibly, but there is none of Christ nor the Spirit in the duty. There is their own working towards God, which is faint and faithless, and not God's own working in them towards himself, which is lively and mighty. And all the religious acts they do are only their own operations, and not the operations of God in them.

This form of godliness, how pleasing soever it be to a man's self, and of what reckoning soever with others who are like himself, yet is indeed of very evil and woful con-

sequence; whether we regard the doings or sufferings unto which this form necessarily engages.

For first, when men, by occasion of this form, are called forth to do the great works of God, and yet are destitute of the power of God, their duties are above their strength, and their strength bears no proportion to their duties. And so, sooner or later, meeting with difficulties, they faint, and languish as a snail, their works being too high for their faculties. For nature being strained above its power, and offering at that which is beyond its abilities, by degrees grows weary, and returns to its old temper again; and he which sought that glory which was not his own, at last lies down in his own shame.

Again; *the form of godliness* exposes a man to those evils that are incident to the faithful because of godliness. Now when a man hath the same evils with the faithful, and not the same power to support him under those evils; when men have the same evils in the flesh, but not the same power in the Spirit; the same burdens on their shoulders, but not the same *everlasting arms* underneath them; they fall sadly and desperately, to the great scandal of the ways of God.

However, if men be not called forth to such eminent doings and sufferings, and so escape such manifest discoveries and downfalls; yet the form of godliness hath this evil in it, that it brings a man only to the troublesome part of religion, but not to the comfortable; it engages a man in the same duties with the godly, but supplies him not with the same strength; it involves him in the same bitterness of flesh, but doth not furnish him with the same joy of spirit. For as such a man's religion doth not reach above flesh and blood, no more doth his strength and comforts. And so he performs duties at a low rate; yea, and his bare and empty form casts a black veil upon religion, and utterly obscures its beauty and glory, and makes the

world judge meanly of it, and to think it a matter only of singularity and humour, and not of power. Whereas, when a Christian walks in the strength of the Spirit, doing and suffering the will of God, beyond all strength and abilities of flesh and blood, the world oftentimes wonders and gazes at him, and many are provoked to "glorify God, who hath given such power to men."

For this *power of godliness*, among other things, hath these three advantages: (1.) It makes a man do every duty strongly and mightily. And whatever might take a man off from duty, or distract and disturb him in it, all falls to nothing before this power. There is that strength in each duty, performed by the power of the anointing, which declares it to be the operation of God himself in man, and nothing else but the very power of God, that is, Jesus Christ himself, in action in us.

(2.) It makes a man inflexible in the ways of God, that he shall neither turn to the right hand nor to the left, but take straight steps towards the mark set before him. No fears, nor favours, nor frowns, nor flatteries, nor temptations, nor insinuations, nor designs of others, nor ends of his own, can turn him aside. He carries such strength in his spirit, as he can never be bended; and so far forth as he partakes of the power of God, he is as unmoveable and unchangeable as God himself.

(3.) It makes a man invincible by all evils and enemies: because all the power against him is but the power of the creature, but the power in him is the power of God. And the power of God easily overcomes the mightiest power of the creature, but is never overcome by it. And if this power in a Christian should be prevailed against, God himself, who is that power, should be conquered; which is impossible.

To conclude: the *power of godliness* is the doer of every duty in God's kingdom, the subduer of every sin, the

conqueror of each tribulation and temptation, the life of every performance, the glory of each grace, the beauty of a Christian's life, the stability of his conversation, the lustre of his religion, his great honour and excellency, both in doing and suffering; yea, it is the very glory of God himself in the church of God: for by faith the Lord arises on us, and by this power of godliness his glory is seen upon us.

These considerations, RIGHT HONOURABLE, moved me to discourse of *the power of the Holy Spirit* coming on all Christians, ministers, and people. And besides the importunity of some other friends, your HONOUR's earnest desires of these notes hath especially prevailed with me to publish them. Not that I am worthy to publish any thing, but that the truth of God is worthy to be published, be the instrument never so mean and unworthy. And although I well know the doubtful success of such undertakings as these, yet in this matter I am not at all careful; being most willing to be bound up in one condition with the truth of God, and to have with it the same common friends and enemies. Besides, *if Christ dwell in my heart by faith*, I carry in my bosom already my reward; out of whom, I neither regard praise or dispraise, good or evil.

Now I was bold to prefix your HONOUR's name to these notes, because your desire of them hath made them yours; and also your many noble favours are a strong and continual engagement for me to serve you, according to what God hath made me. Especially, I remember your extraordinary compassion and bowels towards me in the day of my deepest distress, when my soul drew near to the pit, and the shadow of death sat upon my eyelids, and I had not the least drop of comfort, either from earth or heaven: Your HONOUR then shewed me *the kindness of the Lord*, and encompassed me both with your pity and goodness, though then, through bitterness of spirit, I tasted it not.

Wherefore, when I remember the wonderful goodness of God to me, after so great sorrow and darkness, I cannot forget that part of his goodness, which he was pleased to administer to me by your HONOUR'S hands: and the remembrance of this, causes me to pray that God would double the same goodness on you; and that he would pour forth upon MY LORD, your HONOUR, your noble offspring and family, this power of the Holy Spirit here treated of; which shall render you a thousand times more precious and excellent before God and his saints, than all worldly honour and nobility whatsoever. And by this means shall religion shine in your family in its native beauty and lustre; and the kingdom of God, which stands *not in word, but in power*, shall appear in its bright glory among you, till the kingdom of the Son first fit you, and then deliver you up to the kingdom of the Father, and God be all in all immediately.

Which is the earnest prayer of
Your most humble and faithful Servant,

WILLIAM DELL.

CHRIST'S SPIRIT

A

CHRISTIAN'S STRENGTH:

OR

A PLAIN DISCOVERY OF THE MIGHTY AND INVINCIBLE POWER THAT ALL BELIEVERS RECEIVE THROUGH THE

GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

ACTS I. 8.

But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, &c. Or, *You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.*

THESE words are the more remarkable, because they are the very last words in the conference between the Son of God and his beloved apostles, immediately before his ascension into heaven. Now, you know, when dear and intimate friends are to part, as their love then runs strongest, and their affections are most intire and vehement; so then also they especially discourse of those things wherein most of all they desire to be satisfied and resolved. Thus was it between Christ and his apostles: never was there such dear and intimate friendship, and such sincere and burning love, between any, as between them. The apostles, all of them, loved Christ most truly and passionately; and *Peter*, who had three times denied him, three times professed his love to him; and being sorry that Christ should question his love the third time, he thus answered; *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou*

knowest that I love thee (*a*). And Christ also loved them dearly; yea, he *loved them first; and having loved his own, he loved them unto the end* (*b*): and so he was not discontented with them for their leaving and forsaking him, through human infirmity, when he was led away to judgment, and to death. For though death quite puts out all natural love, yet spiritual love is not extinguished, but enlarged by death. Now when such loving friends as these were even now ready to take their last leave of one another, in regard of bodily presence, who would not most willingly have been present, to have heard what discourse passed between Christ and his disciples at this their last parting?

Now *Luke* acquaints us with the whole sum and substance of Christ's discourse with his apostles, all the time he lived together with them after his resurrection, till the day wherein he ascended into heaven. In the third verse of this chapter, he saith, he did discourse with them *touching the kingdom of God:* that is, not only touching his spiritual kingdom, which he sets up in each particular Christian, and which begins at our regeneration, and is consummated in glorification; but also touching his mediatory and monarchical kingdom, which, in the time appointed of his Father, he should set up in the world; when he should have *the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost ends of the earth for his possession* (*c*); and *all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him* (*d*); and *he should reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the world's end* (*e*). This was the sum of Christ's discourse with them. And the apostles were fully satisfied touching the thing, only they were unsatisfied touching the time. For besides that the setting up this kingdom of the Messias, in the power, beauty and glory of it, was at that time the common discourse and expectation of all *Israel;* the apostles them-

(*a*) John iv. 19. (*b*) John xiii. 1.
(*c*) Psalm ii. 8. (*d*) Dan. vii. 14. (*e*) Psalm lxxii. 8.

selves remembered many prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, for the restoring the kingdom of *David*. And this they thought Christ would have done in the days of his flesh; but presently all their hopes were blasted by his death. But when they saw him risen again from the dead, then presently their hearts were revived into their former hopes; but yet again, seeing nothing done all the time he conversed with them after the resurrection, when he was now ready to ascend into heaven, they desire him, first to resolve them of this question, Whether he would at that time restore the kingdom to *Israel*: *Lord*, say they, *Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Now Christ doth not deny the restoring of the kingdom to *Israel*, but denies to acquaint them with the time when it should be done: he tells them, *It was not for them to know the times and seasons, which the Father had put in his own power*, verse 7.

The like answer to the like demand *Daniel* received in his time. For when the angel had represented to *Daniel* the total destruction of the image of worldly monarchy, together with the rise, and reign, and ruin of Antichrist, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, in the stead of the two former; *Daniel* said, Chap. xii. 8. *And I heard, but I understood not: Then said I, O, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end.* So that the angel, who discovered the things themselves to *Daniel*, refused to discover to him plainly and expressly the time when they should be done; but that was to be closed and sealed up till the time of the end. And so here, in like manner, Christ, who had discoursed largely and clearly to the disciples, touching the kingdom of God, yet denies to discover to them the time when it should be set up in the world. And the reason why he denied this to them, to whom he had not denied himself, was not for

want of love; but because the Father had kept the time and season wherein all this should be done, in his own power. Had this been placed in Christ's power, he had, no doubt, made it known to them, as well as he did those other things which he had heard from his Father; but the Father had not placed this in his Son's power, but had reserved it in his own: and the apostles were not to pry after that which was hidden with God, but were to content themselves with what he had revealed.

But though the Son did not reveal to them what the Father had kept in his own power, yet he tells them what the Father had promised unto them, and what he had also put into his power, and what he would certainly perform ere long; and that was, the gift of the Spirit of power, saying, *But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me, &c.* As if he should have said, "Do not you trouble yourselves about secret things, which shall not be accomplished in the world till many years after you are fallen asleep; but do you mind your present business, wherein you are to serve God in your generation; your present task is to be witnesses unto me, in *Jerusalem*, and all *Judea*, and in *Samaria*, and to the utmost parts of the earth: to declare and make known what you have heard, and seen with your eyes, and looked upon, and your hands have handled, of *the word of life*. You are to testify to the world, my incarnation, doctrine, miracles, life, death, resurrection, and my kingdom and glory that is to come. You are to make known to the world, the high and deep, the great and glorious mystery of Christ, and of the gospel. And that you may be fit for this great and weighty work, you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost: *You shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you*," *&c.*

Which words also may be an answer to another question, which the disciples did or might make, after this manner.

" Our dear Lord and master, why wilt thou leave us, thy poor disciples, among so many evils and enemies in the world, which our weakness must of necessity sink under? We well remember how fearful and foolish we have been whilst thou wast yet with us; but how much more timorous and trembling shall we be when thou art gone from us? When thou wast apprehended by the armed power of the magistrates, thou knowest how we all forsook thee and fled: And I, said *Peter*, denied thee, and forswore thee, at the voice of a simple maid: and therefore, if thou now quite leave us, what witnesses are we like to be unto thee, and what preachers of thy name, among the obstinate Jews, among the angry and enraged rulers and people; who will be ready, for thy name's sake, every day to deliver us up to a new death? And how shall we be able to stand amidst so many difficulties, troubles, distresses, oppositions and persecutions, when thou hast left us? Surely, we are such weak and infirm creatures, that we shall never be able to hold out, but shall lie down both in shame and sorrow."

To this Christ answers in these words; *You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.* As if he should have said, " You have a hard task indeed, but you shall be furnished with proportionable power. The business you are to undertake, is not human, but divine; the things that you are to teach, are not carnal, but spiritual; the work that you are to set upon, is not man's work, but God's. You are to act among men for God; you are to act in the world against the world; you are to act against the devil, in the very midst of the devil's kingdom. You are to convert Infidels, to make of Heathens, Christians; to bring them near unto God, who are now *without God in the world;* to carry the light of heaven up and down this dark world, among the people *that sit in darkness and the shadow of death*, to shew them

the way to life and salvation. You are to turn the world upside-down ; to change the manners and customs of the people ; to bring them off from the idolatry of their forefathers, to worship the true *God in spirit and in truth.* You are to reduce the earth into conformity with heaven, and set up God's kingdom here in this present world. And all this you shall not do in ease and quietness, in prosperity and pleasure ; but whilst you are thus employed and busied, you shall have the whole world rise up against you, and the devil persecuting you with his utmost power, through wicked men ; and you shall not only *be hated of all men for my name's sake ;* but you shall be even overwhelmed with reproaches, obloquies, slanders, oppositions, persecutions, prisons, torments, deaths. And therefore, that you may be able, both to do and to suffer all these things, *You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.*"

Now from these words we shall note something generally, and something more particularly.

In general *three* things. The *first* is this :

I. That as Christ will not suffer his disciples to be tempted above their power, so neither to be employed above their power ; but he furnishes them with power sufficient, both for their temptations, and for their employments ; for their sufferings, and for their doings. And as soldiers, that are under a wise and careful commander, when they are near an engagement, are not suffered to run rashly upon the enemy ; nor permitted to go forth to battle till they are armed and mounted : so Christ would not suffer his disciples to go forth in his warfare, to encounter so many evils, and oppositions, and persecutions, and the whole power of the world, and of the devil, till first he had armed them with the power of the Holy Spirit ; *Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, &c.*

Christ always gives unto all those whom he sends forth and employs, of his own power, for his own works ; hea-

venly power for heavenly works, spiritual power for spiritual works; the power of God, to do the works of God. Indeed, Christ gives unto some a greater measure of power, and to some a less; according as he intends to use some in greater works and difficulties, and some in less: but still they have of Christ's power, whether more or less, who are employed by Christ. And a little of that power that is communicated by Christ, will enable a man to do great things; far greater than the world suspects or imagines.

So that we may judge of our calling to any business, and of our employment in it, by the power we have received from Christ for it. If we have none of the power of Christ, we were never set on work by Christ; for Christ never sets any on his work, without communicating unto them of his power. And hereby we may certainly know and conclude, that those in the ministry that are loose and vicious, idle and negligent, and insufficient for that work, were never called to it, nor employed in it by Christ; but they ran of their own heads, when they were not sent, and minister in the church for the gain of money, and preach only that they might live. Whereas, if Christ had employed them in that calling, he would have furnished them with abilities for it: and they being destitute of such abilities, it is most evident they were not sent by Christ.

Judge then what a kind of reformation this church were like to have, if some men were to have their minds; who would have ignorant and insufficient men, yea loose and profane men, tolerated in the ministry, under pretence of keeping up ordinances; when yet such men were never employed by Christ, nor supplied with any power from him. Yea, and what ordinances, I pray, are they like to be, which are kept up by men that *are carnal, not having the Spirit?* But you see here, that Christ's way and wisdom was different from this; for he first gave the apostles

the power of the Spirit, and then sent them to preach, when he had first enabled them to preach (*f*).

II. You see here, that Christ, being to leave his disciples, in regard of his bodily presence, yet leaves behind him the promise of the Spirit of power; and this was some establishment to them: yea, this gave great joy and comfort to them, who before had their hearts filled with sorrow.

Christ, though sometimes he leaves his people, in regard of sense, yet he never leaves them without a promise. The soul sometimes, in the hours of temptation and desertion, may want the sense and feeling of Christ, but it never wants a promise from Christ; and the promise makes Christ present in his absence: for Christ himself is spiritually present in the promise; and not Christ only, but the Holy Spirit also; for Christ and the Spirit are never asunder: but as the Father and the Son are one, so is Christ and the Spirit one, and all are in the promise. And so the promise is able to uphold the soul in any condition; not because of its own nature, but because God, and Christ, and the Spirit, are present in the promise; and they are infinitely able to support the soul, through the promise, under the greatest evils, either of earth or hell. Now this enjoyment of God in the promise, is the enjoyment of faith, and not of sense; and this enjoyment of faith, is the most excellent and intimate enjoyment of Christ. And thus may the soul enjoy Christ's presence in his absence; his presence according to faith, in his absence according to sense. And therefore, Christ, departing from his disciples, in regard of his bodily presence, leaves with them the promise of the Holy Spirit; and in that promise, his spiritual presence. And this is the worst condition that Christ ever leaves his true church in; he leaves them his

(*f*) Melius est, nullum habere, quam sacrilegum, impium and scelerum ministrum, qui non venit nisi ut mactet and perdat, sicut fur and latro *Luth. de Instit. Ministr. Eccl.*

presence in a promise, when in regard of sense, he forsakes them.

III. Note, that *Luke*, being to speak in this book, of the *Acts* of the apostles, of the propagating, enlarging, and governing the Christian church, doth first make mention of the *pouring forth of the Spirit*, and that both upon the apostles, and afterwards upon the disciples. Signifying hereby, that there is nothing so necessary for the increase and well ordering of the true church of Christ, as the *pouring forth of the Spirit*. And therefore they are altogether deceived, and walk in the light of nature, and not of God, who think the increase, and propagation, and preservation, and establishment, and order, and ordering of the church of God, depend especially upon the councils and decrees, and constitutions of men: and that without these, the church of God would soon come to woful disorder, yea, to utter ruin and confusion. As if Christ and his Spirit sat idle in heaven, and had left the whole business of his church to men; and the sacred power confirmed with the secular, were abundantly sufficient for the increase and well-ordering of the church. In the mean time, not regarding *the promise* of the Father, nor the *pouring out of the Spirit* by the Son. And this is the very *mystery of the mystery of iniquity* among us, and the very head of antichrist, which is yet to be broken. And therefore let us know, that, as the Psalmist saith, *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it;* and *except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain:* so also, except the Lord, through his word, pour forth the promise of the Spirit, and by that Spirit of his, in and through the word, enlarge and govern the church, they labour in vain that undertake these things of themselves. For it is the Spirit alone, that, through the faithful ministry of the word, makes the increase of the church, and lays hold on all the elect, and brings them, through faith, into the unity

of the Son, and of the Father; and teaches them, and orders them, and governs them, and preserves them. And therefore you see here, that *the promise of the Spirit* is first performed, before the church of God hath any enlargement or government.

And now, from these *general* things we proceed to the words more *particularly: Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.* And here we may note two things.

I. What he promises them, and that is *power; you shall receive power.*

II. How they should be made partakers of that power, and that was, *by the Holy Spirit's coming upon them.*

The point we will insist on from both, is this:

"That the receiving of the Spirit, is the receiving of power." Till we receive the Spirit, we are altogether without power; and when we receive the Spirit, then, first of all, do we receive power; *power from on high.*

By nature we are all without strength, weak, impotent creatures, utterly unable to do any thing that is truly and spiritually righteous and good. For by nature we are nothing but flesh; *for that which is born of flesh, is flesh;* and *all flesh is grass;* a fading, withering and decaying thing, together with all the *flowers of it;* that is, the perfections and excellencies of it. So that by nature we are all without power, because we are nothing but *flesh;* of which, *weakness* is an inseparable adjunct.

But when we receive the *Spirit*, we receive *power;* for power is an inseparable adjunct of the Spirit, as weakness is of flesh: yea, the Spirit itself, which is given us, is power; and that both essentially and operatively, in itself and in us.

1. The Spirit is power essentially in itself; for it is *one God with the Father and the Son*, co-essential, co-equal, co-eternal; and so, as Christ is *the power of God*, so also is

the Spirit the power of God: yea, the Spirit is the God of power, as well as the power of God. So that the Spirit is power in himself essentially; and he that partakes of the power of the Spirit, partakes of that power which is God, and no creature.

2. The Spirit is power operatively in us, by being in us,

1. *A spirit of knowledge:* for the Holy Spirit teaches us to know *the things that are freely given to us of God:* yea, he teaches us to know what sin is, and what righteousness; what death is, and what life; what heaven is, and what hell; what ourselves are, and what God is: and these things he teaches us to know otherwise than other men know them. In a word, the Spirit teaches a Christian *to know all things:* that is, to know God, and the kingdom of God, and all the things of both; all other things being nothing in comparison of these. Thus the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of knowledge in us; and so of *power*, for *knowledge is the strength of a man.* Whereas, an ignorant man is a weak man, you may carry him whither you will: but knowledge renders a man strong and immoveable. And in all things wherein the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of knowledge in us, he is also a Spirit of strength.

The Holy Spirit is *a Spirit of power* in us, by being in us a *Spirit of truth.* And so the Spirit is; because it doth not only *lead us unto all truth;* that is, unto the word, which is the only truth; as it is written, *Sanctify them through the truth. Thy word is truth.* But also, the Spirit *leads us into the truth;* it leads *us* into the truth, and *the truth* into us; till we and it become one, by an inseparable union. The Holy Spirit takes a believer, and leads him into one truth after another, till at last it leads him into *all truth.* Now wherein the Spirit is a Spirit of truth to us, it is a Spirit of power: for through the truth we learn from the Spirit of truth, we are altogether stedfast and immoveable, among variety of different and contrary

winds of doctrine. And this is the very cause, that among so many divisions, and factions, and errors, and heresies, which wofully prevail in these present times of ours, the people of God are not seduced and overcome; to wit, because they are all *taught of God*, and not of men; and have the Spirit of truth, to *lead them into the truth*; the Spirit, I say, and not men: and so it is impossible that they should fully and finally be deceived. For wherein we are taught by the Spirit of God, it is impossible we should be perverted by men. Whereas, on the contrary, the true ground why so many are seduced and overcome by the errors and heresies of this age, is because they have taken up their religion only from man's teaching, and have received their opinions or doctrines from men: and so what one man hath taught us, another man can unteach; yea, if we be led to the truth itself only by man, man can again lead us from it. For all the world cannot lead any man into the truth, till the Spirit lead him into it: and when the Spirit doth lead us into the truth, all the men in the world cannot lead us out of it; but we are so sure of those things wherein the Spirit hath been a teacher to us, that if all the councils and churches in the world, yea, all the angels of heaven, should teach us contrary, we should hold them accursed. But a man that hath not been taught of the Spirit, every day you may win him into new opinions, by the power and authority of men, together with the strength of other advantages. But he that hath been led into the truth by the Spirit of truth, is immoveable and invincible among all doctrines. And thus also the Holy Spirit, by being a Spirit of truth, is also a Spirit of power in us.

3. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of power in us, by being in us *a Spirit of wisdom*: and so it is, because it makes us wise with the wisdom of God; wise upon earth after the rate of heaven; wise to salvation. There is no man wise

without the Spirit of God; for the wisdom of carnal men is but foolishness before God, yea, before angels and saints: but the wisdom of the Spirit is most gracious and heavenly wisdom. And this wisdom of the Spirit is the strength of a Christian: the more he hath of it, the more mighty he is, both in all his doings and endurings. It is said, that *there was a poor wise man delivered a small city from the power of a mighty king*, Eccles. ix. 15. and therefore *Solomon* concludes that *wisdom is better than strength;* for it can do greater things than strength can. When *David carried himself wisely*, *Saul*, a great king, was afraid of him: he thought himself too weak to deal with *David*, and *David* too mighty to deal with him, because of his wisdom: and *Solomon* asked wisdom of God, above all things, for the strength of his government; all government without this, being but weak and brittle. Thus wisdom contributes strength to us; whereas we say of a man who wants wisdom, he is a weak man. And so the Holy Spirit being a Spirit of wisdom in us, is also a Spirit of power.

4. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of power in us, by being in us *a Spirit of faith.* For faith is a work of the Spirit of power: and no less power would work faith in us, than *that which raised up Christ from the dead*, Eph. i. 19, when he lay under all the sin of man, and all the wrath of God, and all the sorrows of death, and all the pains of hell; it must be a mighty power indeed that must raise Christ then, and that power was the power of the Spirit; and no less power will work faith. So that whoever truly believes by this faith of the operation of God, is sensible in his own soul, of the self-same power that raised up Christ from the dead. And thus the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of faith in us, and so of power. For unbelief keeps a man in himself, but faith carries a man out to Christ. Now there is no man weaker than he that rests on himself; and there is no man stronger than he that forsakes himself, and rests on Christ.

And so a man, through the power of faith, is able, both to do and endure the self-same things which Christ himself did and endured.

1. He is able to do the same things that Christ himself did; and therefore saith Christ, *All things are possible to him that believeth;* so that a believer hath a kind of omnipotency, and all things are possible to him; because by faith he lays hold upon the power of God; and all things are possible to the power of God; and so all things are possible to a believer, who is partaker of that power of God. And hence *Paul* saith, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13. This *Christ*, that strengthened him, was *the power of God*; and this power of God, is not a finite power, but an infinite: not a particular power, but a universal; and so can do, not some things only, but all things: and so also can all they who are truly partakers of it by faith. Yea, Christ himself hath a greater expression than this, yea, such a one that I never durst have spoken, if Christ himself had not first spoken it; and that is this: *He that believeth in me, the works that I do, shall he do; and greater works than these; because I go to the Father*, John xiv. 12. Where Christ saith, a believer shall not only do the same works with himself, (which also had been a great thing) but also greater works than himself; and this indeed is altogether admirable and wonderful, that a believer should do greater works than Christ. But how is this made good? Why thus: Christ overcame the law, and sin, and death, and hell, and the whole power of the devil, in a body and soul free from sin; his human nature being the immediate formation of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin *Mary*, and so had not the least spot of sin in it. But now believers overcome the same evils, even the law, sin, death, hell, and the whole power of the devil, in corrupted and polluted nature, in bodies and souls, at the first full of sin, and afterwards

defiled through many corruptions. The devil came to Christ, and found nothing in him; and so he overcame: But he comes to a believer, and finds much in him; and yet he overcomes. And this truly is a greater work than Christ did: and these works we do, but not through our own power, but through Christ's, of which we truly partake through faith.

2. A Christian, through the power of faith, is able, not only to do, but also to suffer the same things that Christ himself suffered. Now the sufferings of Christ were the most grievous and intolerable to nature that ever were. For how did Christ, for the present, as it were, lay aside his divine nature, that he might suffer in his human! And how did he suffer in this, the whole weight and condemnation of sin to the very utmost! And the whole wrath of God to the utmost! and all the sorrows of death, and the pains of hell, to the very utmost! And among all his sufferings, had not the least drop of comfort, either from heaven or earth: and yet through the power of the Spirit, he endured and overcame all. And so each Christian is able to endure and overcome the same evils by the same power. And therefore *Paul* desired *to know Christ truly:* not only *the power of his resurrection*, Phil. iii. 10. which any one would desire to know; but also *the fellowship of his sufferings*, which flesh and blood trembles at; yea, and to be *made conformable to his very death.* Yea, I add yet farther, that if a Christian should chance to fall down into hell, (as we believe Christ descended into hell, and so also many of his saints have done, as *David* and *Hezekiah*, &c.) yet a Christian, through the power of the Spirit, were able to overcome both the sins and the pains of hell. And therefore saith *Solomon*, *Love* (which is the power of the Spirit) *is too strong for death, and too hard* (or too cruel) *for hell:* Cant. viii. 5, 6, as is evident in that godly woman, (for I will name but one instance instead of many) who, think-

ing of the torments of hell, and of the hatred and blasphemy of God, which reigned in the damned, did earnestly intreat God, *ut etiamsi damnaretur, tamen Deum diligeret;* "that though she were damned, yet still she might love God." Here love was too hard for hell indeed!

And thus a believer, through faith is enabled, both to do and endure the self-same things which Christ himself did and endured: and the Holy Spirit, by being a Spirit of faith, is a Spirit of power in us.

5. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of power in us, by being in us *a Spirit of righteousness:* and so he is two ways;

1. In regard of mortifying sin. For the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is not idle in us, but continually active; and so from day to day mortifies sin. And this is the proper work of the Spirit in our flesh, to destroy out of us whatsoever is contrary to itself; and that is, every sin, lust, and corruption. Now our sins are our weakness; a man's pride, and passion, and envy, and covetuousness, and lust, and intemperance, and every sin, is his weakness. Now the Holy Spirit, by being in us a Spirit of righteousness, mortifies and destroys all our sins, and so takes away our weakness.

2. Again; as the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of righteousness in us, in regard of mortifying sin, so also in regard of imparting grace to us. For all grace is the fruit and operation of the Spirit in our flesh; and as all light is from the sun, so is all grace from the Spirit. Now every grace is so much strength in the soul: Faith, so much strength; hope, so much strength; love, so much strength; and so humility, and patience, and temperance, and godliness, and brotherly-kindness, and all other graces, are so much strength. And according to each man's measure of grace, so is his measure of strength; and according to each man's measure of the Spirit, so is his measure of grace.

And thus the Holy Spirit, by being a Spirit of righteousness, is also in us a Spirit of power.

6. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of power in us, by being in us a spirit of the fear of the Lord: and so he is, by representing God to us in his glory and majesty, according as he hath revealed himself to us in his word; from which knowledge of God, springs his fear. For what is the reason that the men of the world fear not God, but sin securely against the great and glorious God every day? Why, the reason is, because they know not the Lord. Now the Spirit comes, and reveals the Father in the Son, and presents God to the soul, through his word, in his infinite and eternal power, and justice, and wisdom, and truth, and faithfulness, and love, and mercy, and goodness, &c. and shines to the soul in each attribute of God; and now, when a man sees God by his own light, and knows him by his own teaching, then first doth he begin truly to fear God; and the fear of God is his strength. For he that fears God, is free from all other fear: he fears not men of high degree, nor men of low degree, nor the united power of all the creatures: he fears not the fear of other men in their evils, but in the midst of all fearful things, he is without fear; because *he sanctifies the Lord of hosts in himself, in his heart, and makes him his fear, and his dread,* Isai. viii. 13. And by this means, amidst all evils, he hath admirable confidence and assurance; because he knows that no evil can befal him from any man, or from any creature, till first it be the will of God: and also, that whatever evil befals him, according to the will of God, it shall work for good unto him in the end. Thus the fear of the Lord is a Christian's confidence, and a believer's strength: whereas, he that fears not God, fears every thing; yea, not only real, but imaginary evils; and as evils multiply his fears, so his fears again multiply his evils; till at last he be swal-

lowed up of both. But the Holy Spirit being in us a spirit of the fear of the Lord, is also in us a spirit of strength.

7. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of power in us, by being in us a spirit of love and unity. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of love and unity in the Godhead; for the Father loves the Son, with the Spirit; and the Son loves the Father, with the Spirit; and the Father is one with the Son, in the Spirit; and the Son is one with the Father, in the Spirit; and the Spirit is the bond both of love and unity between the Father and the Son; and God, being most love, and most one, is also most strong. Now what the Spirit is in the Godhead, he is the same in the Church of God, which is the true temple and habitation of the Godhead, and that is, a spirit of love and unity: for why is there such constant love and unity between the members of the same body, but because one spirit runs through them all? And so there is such constant love and unity between all believers, because one Holy Spirit runs through them all. And hence we may take notice of a remarkable difference between nature and grace; for nature, of one makes many; for we all, who are many among ourselves, even a whole world of men, were but one in *Adam: omnes eramus ille unus homo;* but grace, of many, makes one; for the Holy Spirit, which is as fire, melts all the faithful into one mass or lump, and makes of many one body, one thing: yea, it makes them one in the unity of God, according to that of Christ, *John*, xvii. 21. *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us:* mark the words, for they are wonderful; *that they all may be one;* that is, that all believers, who are many among themselves, may be all made one; one? How one? *As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee;* that is, as thou and I, being two persons, are yet but one God: after this highest example of unity, let them be made one in us; as long as

they remain in themselves, they are many; and how much they remain in themselves, they are many; for their unity is not in themselves, but they are one in us, who are one; that is, how much the saints, by the Spirit, are carried into the Father and the Son, who are one; so much also are they made one, not only with the Father and the Son, but also with one another. You may see in the *Acts*, how the multitude of believers, after they had received the Spirit, so far forth as they had received the Spirit, *were of one heart, and of one mind.* And this unity of believers, is their strength; and when God shall take away all those prejudices, and suspicions, and jealousies, and particular ends and interests, and divisions, and separations, and schisms, that are among his own people; and the people of God shall be reduced into this blessed unity among themselves, and the Lord be one, and his name one, among them all; then shall the church also be of admirable and invisible power. *So that, all they that strive with it, shall perish: and all they that war against it, shall be as nothing: yea, then shall the Lord make the church as a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth, and it shall thresh the mountains*, that is, the kingdoms of the world; *and shall beat them small; and shall make the hills*, that is, the lesser commonwealths, *as chaff*, Isai. xli. 15. But till the church of God attain to this unity, it shall not do any excellent thing; it shall not work any notable deliverance in the earth, neither shall the inhabitants of the world fall. When the Spirit of God shall be a spirit of unity in the faithful, and shall heal all the sad differences and dissensions that are now between them, then also shall it be a spirit of admirable power in them.

And thus much for the explication of the point.

The use is twofold.

1. The first is, to exhort all men, every where, to endeavour to partake of this supernatural, spiritual, and di-

vine power of the Holy Spirit, which is certainly communicated to all the faithful and elect in Christ Jesus. And let no man think it is a thing indifferent, whether he have this power or no; but know, that the having of this power of the Spirit, is of absolute necessity, and that both for ministers, and for all other Christians.

1. There is a necessity of this power of the Holy Spirit for ministers; and to them this present place doth chiefly relate.

1. For, first, if they have not this power of the Holy Spirit, they have no power at all. For Christ sent them, only as his Father sent him; and so Christ never gave unto them any earthly, or human, or secular power; no power of swords or prisons, no power of outward constraint and violence. Christ gave them no such outward and worldly power, for the enlargement of his kingdom, as not being at all suitable to it. For his kingdom is spiritual; and what can carnal power do in a spiritual kingdom? His kingdom is heavenly; and what can earthly power do in a heavenly kingdom? His *kingdom is not of this world;* and what can worldly power do in a kingdom that is not of the world? And though antichrist and his ministers have arrogated and usurped such a carnal, and earthly, and worldly power to themselves, in their pretended managing the kingdom of Christ, yet the faithful ministers of Christ cannot.

And therefore, seeing the ministers of the gospel have no power from beneath, they must needs have power from on high; seeing they have no fleshly power, they must needs have spiritual power; seeing they have no power from earth, and from men, they must needs have power from heaven, and from God; that is, the power of the Holy Spirit coming on them, or else they have no power at all.

2. The ministers of the gospel must needs have this power of the Holy Spirit, because otherwise they are not sufficient for the ministry. For no man is sufficient for the work of the ministry, by any natural parts and abilities of his own, nor yet by any acquired parts of human learning and knowledge; but only by this power of the Holy Spirit: and till he be endued with this, notwithstanding all his other accomplishments, he is altogether insufficient. And therefore, the very apostles were to keep silence, till they were endued with this power: they were to wait at Jerusalem till they had received the promise of the Spirit, and not to preach till then. Yea, Christ himself did not betake himself to the work of the ministry, till first the spirit of God came upon him, and anointed him to preach. And therefore, for thirty years together, he did not preach publicly and ordinarily, till at John's baptism he received this power of the Spirit, coming on him. Now if Christ himself, and his apostles, were not sufficient for the ministry, till they had received this power from on high, no more are any other ministers whatsoever. For, as I said, it is not natural parts, and abilities, and gifts, and learning, and eloquence, and accomplishments, that make any man sufficient for the ministry; but only the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon him. So that whosoever is destitute of the spirit of power, is insufficient for the work of the ministry; and that in these respects:

1. Without this power of the Spirit, ministers are utterly unable to preach the word; that is, the true, spiritual, and living word of God. For to preach this word of God, requires the power of God. One may speak the word of man, by the power of man, but he cannot speak the word of God, but by the power of God. And Christ himself, in all his ministry, spoke nothing of himself, in the strength of his human nature; but he spake all he spake

by the power of God; and without this power of God, he could not have spoken one word of God. And so, in like manner, no man is able to preach Christ, but by the Holy Spirit, which is the power of God. For Christ is the power of God; and can never be represented, but by the Holy Spirit, which is the power of God. For as we see light in his light; that is, the Father, who is light, in the Son, who is light; or else the Son, who is light, in the Holy Spirit, who is light; so we know power in his power; that is, the Son, who is power, in the Holy Spirit, who is power. And Christ, who is the power of God, can never be made known to the church, but by the ministration of the Spirit, which is the power of God. So that it is not an easy thing to preach Christ, the power of God; yea, none can do it aright, but by the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon him.

2. Without this power of the Spirit, ministers are unable to preach the word powerfully. They may, it may be, happen upon the outward word; yet there is no power in their ministry, till they have received this power of the Spirit, coming upon them. Otherwise their ministry is cold, and there is no heat in it; it is weak, and there is no strength in it.

1. It is cold, and there is no heat in it. Without men have received the power of the Spirit, there is no fire in their preaching. Their ministry is unlike the ministry of *Elias*, whose ministry was as fire; and unlike *John* Baptist's, who, in his ministry, was *a burning and shining light;* and unlike Christ's, whose ministry made the disciples *hearts burn within them;* and unlike the apostles, who, having received the Spirit, were as men made all of fire, running through the world, and burning it up. Without this Spirit, a man's ministry is cold, it warms the hearts of none, it inflames the spirit of none; but leaves men still frozen in their sins.

2. It is weak, and hath no might in it. There is no strength in a ministry where there is no Spirit. Whereas, when men have received the Spirit, then their ministry is a powerful ministry; as *Paul*, 1 *Thess.* i. 5. *The Gospel came to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost;* and therefore in power, because in the Holy Spirit. And again, 1 *Cor.* ii. 4. *My speech and preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and power.* Where you see the Spirit and power in the work of the ministry are always conjoined, as the sun and light are. And that ministry that is in the Spirit, is always in power: and being in power, it is always effectual, either to convert men, or to enrage them: and the enraging of men, is as evident a sign of the Spirit of power in a man's ministry, as the conversion of men. Whereas, a cold and dead ministry, that is destitute of this power, doth, as we used to say, neither good nor harm; neither converts nor enrages; neither brings in righteousness, nor destroys sin; neither kills nor quickens any; but leaves men in their old temper for many years together, and never stirs them. But the ministration of the Spirit and power is operative and mighty, and carries all before it. And though evil and carnal men will ever be murmuring, and wrangling, and opposing, and contending against such a ministry; yet they are never able to resist the wisdom and spirit of it; as the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, *were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which* Stephen *spake*, Acts vi. 10. And therefore, let them that will needs be striving against such a ministry, know, that they strive against more than a mere man; they strive against power from on high; against the greatest power that ever God put forth; against the power of Christ himself, and his Eternal Spirit; and so they shall never be able to prevail against this power; but shall surely sink under it. But to return from whence we have a little digressed.

3. Without this power of the Spirit, as ministers are not able to preach the word, nor to preach it powerfully, so neither are they able to hold out in their ministry, and to carry it on strongly against all opposition and contradiction. *Peter* and *John* preached the gospel, but presently the rulers, and elders, and scribes, convened them; *and straitly threatened them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus*, Acts iv. 17, 18. And now, if the apostles had wanted this power of the Spirit, they would presently have been snubbed and awed, and would have sneaked away, and you should have heard no more of them. But they having received this power, all the threatnings and scornings of the rulers and magistrates could not deter them from the discharge of their office, and that ministry they had received from Christ. But though before, they were fearful, and trembling, and daunted at the apprehension of the least danger; yet now, having received this power, they are altogether undaunted; and said to the rulers and elders, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye*, Acts iv. 19. As if they should have said, "O ye rulers and elders of the people, our case is a plain case, wherein we are most willing that even your ownselves should be judges: For we have received a command from God to preach the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ; and you forbid us to do that, which God hath commanded us. Now do you yourselves be judges, who is fittest to be obeyed, God or you? The great and glorious God of heaven and earth, or poor wretched men, such as yourselves? Nay, what God hath commanded us, we must, and will obey, against all your threatnings and punishments, and whatever you can say or do. We cannot conceal, but must publish, what we have seen and known of our Lord Jesus Christ; of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension,

kingdom, glory, and of that great redemption and salvation, which he hath wrought, and purchased for all the elect of God."

Now I would to God that the unjust commands of all magistrates, and secular powers whatsoever, might be no otherwise obeyed than this unjust command of the rulers was by *Peter* and *John;* and that no man would dare to yield more obedience to the creature, than to the Lord of all.

For no princes or magistrates in the world, have any power to forbid the preaching of the everlasting gospel, which God hath commanded should be published to all nations, for the obedience of faith; I say, they have no power at all to forbid the preaching of this gospel, or of any one truth of it, though ever so cross to their designs. And if they should, yet herein ought we to know no more obedience than *Peter* and *John* did here. We ought to obey God and not them; and to make known the whole mind of God, though it be never so contrary to their mind; after the example of *Peter* and *John*, who having received this power of the Holy Spirit, held on their ministry, against all the countermands, and threatnings, and punishments of the magistrates. Whereas, without this power, they had soon fainted and failed, and had never been able to have gone through with it.

4. Without this power of the Holy Spirit, ministers are not able to reprove the world. For every man, by nature, seeks the amity of the world; and no man, by his good will, would provoke the enmity of it against himself. And therefore, flesh and blood will never *reprove the world of sin*, but allows it, and countenances it in sin. But now *the Spirit, when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.* When a man hath this power of the Spirit in him, then presently he reproves, and argues, the world of sin; and so by his ministry bids defiance to the whole world, and

provokes the whole world against himself. And this no man either can do, or dares do, except he be first endued with this power of the Spirit, coming on him. And therefore saith *Micah*, chap. iii. 8. *I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might; to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.*

The world, of all other things, cannot endure the reproof of sin, and the declaration of its evil ways. And therefore it is exceedingly offended, yea, and extremely rages against the faithful teachers of the word, with all sorts of punishments and persecutions; as the examples of all the prophets, apostles, and faithful teachers of the word of God, in all ages do declare. Yea, and Christ himself testifies touching himself; *Therefore the world hates me, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.* But now, they that will connive at sin, and flatter the world in its own ways, these are the only men of reckoning, and live in all wordly honour and prosperity. And all ages can witness, that all teachers are not of that strength and resolution, to contemn the hatred and fury of the world; nay, the most are quite overcome with the prosperity of this present life, and with the desire of friends, and riches, and preferments; and so wink at the sins of the world, and are ministers *in whose mouths are no reproofs*, though the whole world lie in wickedness. For, thus they escape the rage and violence, and obtain the favour and love, of the men of this world. And thus weak and unworthy are those men who are only endued with their own spirits: But now, saith *Micah, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might; to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.*

As if he should have said, "The power of the Spirit of the Lord dwelling in me, puts forth itself two ways, in judgment, and in fortitude."

1. In judgment; and this signifies the reproving and

the condemning sin and wickedness, as the prophet himself explicates; saying, that I might *declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.* But seeing their being full of judgment doth not want danger, but exposes a man to a thousand evils, inasmuch as the world can endure nothing less than the reproof of sin; therefore I am, by the power of the Spirit, not only full of judgment, but also,

Secondly, full of might; as the spirit of judgment exposes me to danger, so the spirit of might enables me to contemn those dangers. So that, though the world, because of the spirit of judgment, threatens never so many evils; yet the prophet is not frighted from his office, but, through the spirit of might, discharges it faithfully, in despite of all those threatnings.

And whenever ministers want this spirit of might, though out of danger, they may be confident; yet, at the very first encounter of evil, they will bend and yield, and speak and do all things for the favour of the world; rather than, for the truth's sake, they will expose themselves to the hatred and opposition of the world.

5. Without this power of the Spirit, they are unable to wrestle with, and overcome the devil; whose subtilty, and wrath, and malice, and power, they must needs encounter with, in the work of the ministry. Christ, as soon as he was endued with this power, and anointed by the Spirit to preach, was immediately led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil; who would fain have taken him off from the work of the ministry, if it had been possible: but Christ, being endued with this power, overcame the devil. And Christ, before he sent his apostles to preach the kingdom of God, as you may see, *Luke* ix. 1. called them together, *and gave them power and authority over all devils:* and when they returned, they told him, that *the devils themselves were subject to them.* But now, the seven

sons of *Sceva*, who were destitute of this power, when they took upon them to call over one who had an evil spirit, the name of the Lord Jesus; and to say, *We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth;* the evil spirit answered and said, *Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?* And so "the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped upon them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, and they fled away naked and wounded;" *Acts* xix. So that they being destitute of this power from on high, the devil was presently too hard for them, and they were overcome by the devil. But now, they that are invested with this power of the Holy Spirit, are able to wrestle with *principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world;* and to out-wrestle them, and to tread satan himself under their feet.

Sixthly: Without this power of the Holy Spirit, they are unable to suffer persecution for the word; but the least touch of evil causes them to pull in their horns; and each reproach, and opposition, and persecution shakes them down. Whereas, this power makes them confident, courageous, comfortable, and invincible, in the midst of all evils. See this in some examples. Our Lord Jesus Christ being anointed with the Holy Spirit, and with power, did not only preach the truth in his life, but also *witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate*, and sealed to the truth with his death. *Paul*, who was endued with the same power, when *Agabus* foretold him by the Holy Spirit, of his bonds at *Jerusalem*, and the brethren hearing it, came weeping to *Paul*, and besought him to keep himself out of bonds, by not going up thither; *Paul* reproved them, and told them, that he *was ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus*. *Chrysostom* was endued with the same power, and so resolved to preach the truth, and not to depart from the truth, though the whole world should wage war against him alone; and professed,

that he desired nothing more than to suffer for the cause of Christ; and that, "If it were offered to him of God, whether he would immediately go to heaven, or stay on earth and suffer for Christ; he would a thousand times rather choose this latter than the former." Because, in going immediately to heaven, he should seek himself, but in staying on earth to suffer for Christ, he should wholly deny himself, and seek his honour alone. *Luther* was endued with the same spirit of power; and so when he was called to *Worms*, before the emperor *Charles* the fifth, and before all the estates of the empire, to render a reason of his doctrine; and some of his friends (perceiving undue dealing among his adversaries) persuaded him not to go, to expose himself to danger; but he answered with a mighty spirit (*g*), "I have decreed, and am resolved, because I am called, to go into the city, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; though I knew there were so many devils to oppose me, as there are tiles on all the houses of the city." And when he was called to return to *Wittenberg* by the people, which he could not do without most evident and apparent danger, he being already condemned by the edicts and authority, both of the pope and emperor; and so in regard of them, could expect no less than a violent death every day; yet for all this, he was resolved to return to his charge; and upon this occasion, hath this passage to the duke of Saxony (*h*).

(*g*) Mihi vero qui vocatus sum, decretum & certum est ingredi urbem, in nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi, etiamsi scirem tot diabolos mihi oppositos, quot sunt tegulæ in omnibus totius urbis tectis.

(*h*) Verum quid faciam? urgent me causæ inevitabiles, Deus cogit & vocat, hic nulli creaturæ tergiversandum est. Age fiat igitur in nomine Jesu Christi qui est Dominus vitæ & mortis. Nihil habeo quod possim perdere: Domini ego sum; si perdor, Domino perdor, id est invenior. Alium ergo quære quem terreas. Verum ego scio & certus sum, Josum Christum Dominum nostrum vivere & regnare: quo sci-

" But what shall I do? unavoidable causes urge me, God himself calls and compels me, and here I will turn my back to no creature. Go to then, let me do it in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord, both of life and death." Again, in his answer to the Dialogue of *Silvester Prierias*, who had threatened him; he saith, " I have nothing that I can lose; I am the Lord's, and if I am lost, I am lost to the Lord; that is, I am found. And therefore seek somebody else to fright, for me you cannot." Again, in his Answer to *Ambrotius Catharinus*, he saith of the pope and his instruments, " they seek not to overcome me with scriptures, but to destroy me out of the earth; but I know and am sure, that Christ our Lord lives and reigns. And being even filled with this knowledge and confidence, I will not fear many thousands of popes: *For greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.*" And again, in his epistle to his father, he hath this remarkable passage; " What if the pope shall kill me or condemn me below hell? He cannot raise me up again when I am slain, and kill me a second and third time. And having once condemned me, I would never have him absolve me. For I am confident that the day is at hand, wherein that kingdom of abomination and destruction shall be itself destroyed. But would I might first be counted worthy, either to be burn-

entia & fiducia inflatus, non timebo etiam multa millia Paparum. Major est enim qui in nobis, quam qui in mundo est. Quid si me occidat Papa aut damnet ultra Tartara? Occisum non suscitabit, ut bis & iterum occidat: damnatum vero ego volo ut numquam absolvat. Confido enim, instare diem illum quo destruetur regnum illud abominationes & perditionis. Utinam nos primi digni simus, vel exuri vel occidi ab eo, quo sanguis noster magis clamat, & urgeat judicium illius accelerari. Sed si digni non sumus sanguine testificari, hanc saltem oremus & imploremus misericordiam, ut vita & voce testemur, quod Jesus Christus solus est Dominus & Deus noster, Benedictus in secula seculorum. *Luther.* in *Epist. ad Patr.*

ed or slain by him, that so my blood might cry the louder, and urge his judgment to be the more hastened. But if I am not worthy to testify with my blood, let me at least intreat and implore this mercy, that I may testify by my life and doctrine, that Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, and God blessed for ever and ever."

Calm *Melancthon* was endued with the same spirit of power; and so, when his enemies threatened him not to leave him a place in all *Germany* whereon to set his foot, he said, Avido & tranquillo animo expecto exilia; "I expect banishment with a desirous and peaceful mind."

Many more examples might be produced, to show, that when ministers are endued with the power of the Spirit coming on them, then they are stronger than all opposition and persecution whatsoever; otherwise, when these evils encounter them, they, with *Demas*, leave the work; and embrace the world.

And thus you see, what necessity all the faithful ministers of the gospel have, of the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon them; and without this power, though they be called ministers, yet they are none: For without this power, they are unable to preach the word, to preach it powerfully, and to persevere and hold out in the course of the ministry; they are unable to reprove the world; to wrestle with and overcome the devil; and to suffer that persecution, which necessarily attends that calling. And so without this power, they may minister to themselves, but cannot minister to others the manifold graces of God: they may do their own work, but they cannot do God's work; they may feed themselves, but not the flock of Christ: they may domineer over the sheep, but cannot drive away the wolf: they may build up their own houses, but cannot build up God's house.

Secondly, As the Holy Spirit, and the power of it, is ne-

cessary for ministers, so also for all other Christians whatsoever.

But some here will be ready to say, yea, but do all believers receive the Spirit of God, and the power of the Spirit, as ministers do?

Yes, equally and alike with them, without any difference. This is evident, *Acts* xi. 15. where *Peter* tells the Jews, who contended with him for conversing and eating with the Gentiles, that when *He began to speak the word to them, the Holy Spirit fell on them*, saith he, *as on us at the beginning*. And again, *ver.* 17. *Forasmuch then as God gave unto them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God.* So that God gave the Holy Spirit to as many Gentiles as believed, in like manner as he did unto the apostles themselves: and they received the same power of the Holy Spirit coming on them, as the apostles did. Whereby you may perceive, that not ministers only are spiritual men, and all others temporal, as the Papists have taught, and many ignorant people among ourselves, are still persuaded: but all true believers are spiritual, as well as they, being born of the Spirit, and baptized with the Spirit, equally as they are.

And so all true believers, as well as ministers, being endued with the Spirit; are also endued with the power of the Spirit, and so have more than an earthly power in them. They have all of them power of another nature than the power of the world; they partake of spiritual, heavenly and divine power, even of the very power of Christ himself; which infinitely transcends all the power of the creature.

You see then clearly, that all faithful Christians have the spirit of power, and the power of the Spirit coming on them, as well as ministers: And they stand in need of both these, for these causes;

1. They stand in need of the spirit of power, first, to difference and distinguish them from reprobates, and devils: for without the gift of the Spirit, there is no difference between us and them. For *Michael* doth not differ from the devil, nor *Gabriel* from *Beelzebub*, but only by the Spirit. And *Moses* differs not from *Pharaoh*, nor *Abel* from *Cain*, nor *Jacob* from *Esau*, nor *Peter* from *Judas*, in regard of their substance, but in regard of the Spirit; which the one received, and the others were counted unworthy of.

2. To advance them above the condition of flesh and blood, and above all those, in whom is none of God's Spirit. The excellency of each creature is according to its spirit; for the more excellent the spirit of the creature is, the more excellent is the the creature itself; and each creature is valued and rated according to the spirit of it. How excellent then must they be above all the world, who have received the Spirit that is of God? Surely these are people of the most excellent spirit: And hence it is, that "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;" because his spirit is more excellent than his neighbour's.

3. To unite them unto Christ. The Spirit is the bond of union between the Father and the Son, in the Godhead; and the Father and the Son, are one in the Spirit, as we spake before. And now the same Spirit is our bond of union with Christ, and makes us one with Christ, as Christ is one with God, and unites us unto Christ in the unity of God; for as Christ is one with the Father, in the Spirit, so are we one with Christ in the Spirit: For *he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit;* and he that is not one Spirit with the Lord, is not joined to him.

4. All faithful Christians stand in need of the power of the Spirit, as well as of the Spirit of power.

1. To change their nature, which is impossible to all power but the power of the Spirit. It would be a great power, to change clay into gold, and a pebble into a diamond; but it is a greater change that is wrought in a Christian, and requires a greater power. For the power of the Spirit, when it comes into our flesh, changes the nature of it. For it finds a man carnal, it makes him spiritual; it finds him earthly, it makes him heavenly; it finds him a drunkard, it makes him sober: an adulterer, it makes him chaste; a swearer, it makes him fear an oath; proud, it makes him humble; it finds him darkness, it makes him light in the Lord; in a word, it finds him nothing but a lump of sin, and makes him the righteousness of God in Christ. Thus the power of the Spirit changes our whole corrupt nature, and makes it conformable to the divine nature; as fire makes the iron in which it prevails, like unto itself, communicating its own nature to it. After this sort, the power of the Spirit changes our nature, and our nature cannot be changed without it. But without this power of the spirit, we shall always remain the same we were born, without any change at all. Yea, our corruption will, by daily use and exercise, increase in us, till at last it quite eat out that common natural good, which God hath given to every one of us, for the common benefit of mankind.

2. All Christians have need of the power of the Spirit to work grace in them. For our natures are wholly carnal and corrupt; and nothing can implant grace in them, but the mighty power of God's Spirit. And it is as great a miracle to see the grace of God dwelling in the corrupt nature of man, as to see the stars grow upon the earth. And yet the power of the Spirit doth this, as it is written, *Truth shall spring out of the earth*, Psal. lxxxv. 11. and again, *Great and precious promises are made to us, that we should be partakers of the Divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4, and again,

He hath predestinated us that we should be conformable to the image of his Son. That is, as in other things, so also in his virtues. So that the power of the spirit implants grace in our nature; and each grace is so much of the power of the spirit, in our flesh, as was said before. Wherefore we must needs learn to know, whose power the power of grace is. For though grace be a power in our flesh, it is not the power of our flesh: for *Paul* saith, *in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing:* but and if any good be in my flesh, it dwells not in my flesh, but in God's Spirit which dwells in me. As light is in the air, but dwells in the sun, so when men are regenerate, good is in the flesh, but dwells in the Spirit. For grace in the soul, is nothing but so much of the power of the spirit, immediately dwelling and working in us; and when the Spirit is gone, all grace goes along with him, as all light with the sun: but it dwells in him, and is inseparable from him.

3. All Christians stand in need of the power of the Spirit to enable them to mortify and destroy sin. There is no power in our flesh against sin; but all the power of our flesh, is for it: and therefore it must be another power than the power of our flesh that must destroy sin, and that can be no other than the power of God's Spirit. And the power of the spirit destroys the whole body of sin, and each particular strong corruption.

1. The whole body of sin, in all the parts, and members, and branches of it; each several influence and operation of the Spirit, being a several destruction, of some sin or other. For as the spirit that is in us, lusts after envy, or pride, or vain-glory, or covetousness, or uncleanness, or the like; so the Spirit we have of God, according to its mighty power, destroys all those sinful works of our corrupt spirit, and mortifies all the deeds of our flesh; according to that of *Paul, If ye mortify the deeds of the flesh,*

by the Spirit, ye shall live, Rom. viii. 13. The flesh will never mortify its own deeds but the spirit must mortify the deeds of the flesh; and this will mortify them, according to the whole latitude of them.

2. Again, as the power of the spirit subdues the whole body of sin, so also it overpowers each particular strong corruption, and keeps a Christian straight and upright in the ways of God. Every man hath some one corruption, to which, by nature, he is more inclined than to another, and this is the bias of a man; but the strength of the spirit will overpower this. A bowl, if it be thrown with strength, knows not its bias, but is carried on straight, as if it had no bias at all. So the godly have still some flesh in them, which is their bias, and carries them from God to themselves and the world, but the strength of the Spirit takes away this bias, and makes us take straight steps to God.

4. All Christians stand in need of the power of the spirit, to enable them to perform duties, to perform them aright, that is, spiritually. For spiritual duties may be performed, for the outward work carnally; and in such duties there is no strength, but weakness, because there is none of the Spirit in them. For there is no power in any duty, except there be something of the spirit in the duty. There is no more power in praying, nor in preaching, nor in hearing, nor in meditation, nor in reading, nor in resisting evil, nor in doing good, nor in any duty of sanctification, or of mortification, than there is of the spirit in them.

And according to the measure of the spirit in each duty, is the measure of power in the duty. If there be none of the Spirit in a man's duties, there is no power at all in them, but only weakness and deadness, and coldness, and unprofitableness. If a little of the spirit, there is a little power; if abundance of the spirit, there is great power; and that duty that is most spiritual, is the most powerful.

And therefore saith *Paul*, *I will pray with the Spirit*, and *I will sing with the Spirit;* and all the worship of the faithful is in the spirit. *Philip* iii. 3. *We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.* So that there is no more power in any duty, than there is of the spirit in it; and there is no more acceptance of any duty with God, than there is of power in it.

Fifthly: All Christians stand in need of the power of the spirit, to enable them to the use of the word, and that both in private, and in public, as occasion serves.

1. In private; for *no man can say, that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Spirit.* No man can speak of Christ spiritually, but by the spirit; and without this spirit, which searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to us, Christians are unable to give the sense of the word of God in their families, and among their friends, and acquaintance, and are also ashamed to do it. Whereas, the Spirit of God gives us both ability and boldness: as *Aquila* and *Priscilla* his wife, did not only speak the word in their family, but also took *Apollos*, a minister, home, when they perceived him somewhat ignorant in the mystery of Christ, *and instructed him in the way of God more perfectly.*

2. They have need of the power of the Spirit, to enable them to speak the word of God in public, as every Christian may do, if he come where people are ignorant of God's word, and there are no ministers to do it. This I say, in such a case, we may do by virtue of his anointing with the Spirit; and for this you may see the practice of *Stephen* and *Philip*, who were but deacons, and not elders or ministers, and yet published the word, where the people were ignorant; yea, you may see, Acts viii, how all the disciples, except the apostles, were, by reason of a great persecution, scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, *and they that were so scattered, went every where, preaching the word,* because the people among which they

were, were ignorant, and there was no body else to do it. And God, having made known Christ unto them, they could not but declare him unto others: the love, both of Christ, and of their brethren, constraining them. But this is in case of necessity, and where other faithful Christians are absent: otherwise, when Christians are present, no man can take that to himself, without the consent of all, which belongs to all.

Sixthly: All Christians stand in need of this power of the Spirit, to enable them to confess the word, before kings, and rulers, and magistrates, when they are called thereunto. Whereas, without this power, they would tremble, and bite in the truth. In *Matt.* x. Christ tells his disciples, *that they shall be brought before governors and kings, for his name's sake.* But, saith he, *verse* 19. *When they shall deliver you up, take no thought, how, or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour, what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* Here Christ tells his disciples that they should be brought before great men, yea, before the greatest in the world, to give testimony to his truth. And surely, it is a very hard thing, for a man not to be daunted then, but to be unmoveable, before all worldly power and glory, and all the terrible frowns and threats of mighty men. Now, saith Christ, at such a time, when you are to speak before the armed power of the world, be not troubled beforehand, how, or what to say. For if you have Christ and his spirit in your hearts, you cannot want words in your mouths. And the truth which you profess is most glorious when it is most naked, and destitute of the garnishings of human eloquence and wisdom. And therefore be not fearful beforehand, no, nor yet careful, touching what you shall say; *for it shall be given you in that same hour,* in that same moment; you shall have most present help.

How so? *for it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that dwells in you.* The spirit of truth that dwells in you, shall enable you to speak the words of truth, when you are called to it. And though you, it may be, are plain and mean men, and your lips would tremble, and be quite closed up before such an assembly of power and majesty: yet God's spirit shall give you a mouth to speak even then. And because, if you were only supplied with a mouth to speak at such a time, you would be ready to speak rashly, and foolishly, to the great prejudice and disadvantage of the truth, therefore he will give you not only a mouth, but wisdom too: and he himself will manage his own cause with your mouths. And you shall so speak, as all your *adversaries shall not be able to resist* the truth that you speak; but shall be so convinced in their consciences, that their tongues shall not know what to say. You shall have a mouth and wisdom, and they shall want both.

And thus have many poor, mean, simple Christians, when brought before rulers and magistrates, been able to carry out the truth in that strength, that all their adversaries have been put to silence and shame, as you may see in a multitude of examples in the Book of Martyrs. And all this they did, by the power of the Spirit coming upon them.

Seventhly and lastly: All Christians stand in need of the power of the Spirit, to overcome afflictions and persecutions, from which it is impossible they should be free in this world, they being contrary to the world, and the whole world to them. A natural man who hath no strength in himself, but his own strength, faints and fails under affliction and persecution: but the faithful have in them strength above natural strength, strength above the strength of men, even the strength of the Spirit coming on them, and so they endure and overcome. Our

spirits are weak spirits, and are conquered by every evil; but when they are strengthened by the power of God's Spirit, they are, over all evils, more than conquerors. And this is one thing observable, between natural and spiritual strength, in the overcoming of evil. Natural strength seeks always to throw off the evil, and so it prevails; but spiritual strength never seeks the removing of the evil, but let the evil be what it will, it stands to it, and overcomes it. For the strength of the Spirit is able, easily to overcome all evils that can happen to flesh and blood, whether they arise from earth or hell. And thus those blessed Martyrs mentioned, *Hebr.* xi. and thousands and ten thousands of their consorts since, have overcome cruel mockings and scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonment, and stoning, and sawing in sunder, and slaying with the sword, and all the woes of poverty and want, and banishment, and of living in wildernesses and caves, and dens of the earth; these and all other evils, they have mightily overcome, by this only power of the Spirit coming upon them. Thus we stand in need of the power of the Spirit, to overcome affliction and persecution; and how much power we have, in affliction and persecution, to endure them, and overcome them, just so much of the power of the Spirit we have, and no more.

And thus also have I declared unto you what necessity all Christians have of the power of the Spirit coming upon them, as well as ministers. And this was to strengthen the use of exhortation.

The second use is for information and instruction, after this manner. If the receiving of the Spirit be the receiving of power, then it clearly informs us, that the way to partake of this power, is to obtain this spirit; and the way to increase this power, is to increase this spirit. I shall endeavour to speak to both these things, and so shall conclude.

1. The way to obtain this power, is to obtain the Spirit.

And that we may obtain the Spirit, we must first prepare ourselves to receive the Spirit.

Now this preparation doth not stand (as Papists teach, and many ignorant persons among ourselves think) in sweeping the soul from sin, and then strewing it with graces, that so we may be fit to receive the Spirit.

For first, The sweeping of the soul from sin, is not a work of our own, before the coming of the Spirit, but a work of the Spirit itself, after it is come. For no flesh can clear the soul of one sin; it is the Spirit must do that.

And secondly, For the strewing of the soul with grace, neither is this a work of our own, but a work of the Spirit itself, after it is come. For the Spirit itself brings all grace with it; and before the coming of the Spirit, there is no grace at all.

So that, we cannot by any acts of our own, prepare ourselves to receive the Spirit; but only by the Spirit we prepare ourselves to receive the Spirit. For it is not any work of our own, upon ourselves, but the immediate work of the Holy Spirit upon us, that can make us fit to receive himself. It lies wholly in his own power and goodness, first, to prepare in us a place for himself, and then after to receive and entertain himself, in that place he hath so prepared. Now the works of the Spirit, whereby he first prepares us for himself, and then entertains himself in us, are these two especially.

1. He empties us; and 2. He fills us with himself, whom he hath made empty.

1. He empties us. And this emptying is the first and chief work of the Spirit upon the elect, whereby he prepares them to receive himself. For the more empty a man is of other things, the more capable he is of the Spirit. If you would fill a vessel with any other liquor than

it holds, you must first empty it of all that is in it before; if you would fill it with wine, you must first empty it of beer or water, if any such liquor be in it. For two material things cannot possibly subsist in the same place, at the same time, the substances of each being safe and sound. And so, if the Holy Spirit, who is God, must come into us; all mortal and unstable creatures, together with sin and ourselves, and whatever else is in us, must go forth. Human reason, and human wisdom, and righteousness, and power, and knowledge, cannot receive the Holy Spirit: but we must be emptied of these, if ever we would receive him.

We must thus suffer ourselves to be prepared by the Spirit, to receive the Spirit: but with this caution, That when the Spirit of God hath wrought this in us, we do not attribute it to ourselves, as our own work, nor think any thing of ourselves, but descend into our own meer nothing. Otherwise we shall be a hindrance to the Spirit, that he cannot work in us after a more excellent manner.

And when a man is thus empty of himself, and of other things, then he becomes *poor in spirit*, and such the Spirit always fills, and descends into with a wonderful and irresistible power, and fills the outer and inner man, and all the superior and inferior faculties of the soul, with himself, and all the things of God.

And this is the second work of the Spirit, to fill those whom he hath emptied. Now the usual and ordinary means, through which the Spirit doth this, are these three.

1. The hearing of the word preached. But here we must distinguish of the word. For the law is the word of God; but St. *Paul* saith, that by that word the Spirit is not given, but by the word of the gospel. And therefore, *how beautiful are the feet of them that bring the gospel of peace!* for nothing is so sweet and precious as the word of the gospel,

which brings with it the Holy Spirit. This you may see, *Acts* x. 44. where it is said, *that whilst Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.* And therefore also the gospel is called, *the ministration of the Spirit:* because, as it proceeds from the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit gives utterance, so it also conveys the spirit to the faithful. Now the gift of tongues and miracles, and other such like gifts, are at the present ceased in the church: but the gift of the spirit is not ceased; and this the Lord still joins with the ministry of the gospel, that he may keep in our hearts the due respect of this ordinance.

2. Means, is faith in the word heard. For it is not every one that hears the word, that receives the spirit: but only they that hear with the hearing of faith. For if thou hear the word of the gospel a thousand times, and wantest faith, thou shalt never receive the spirit; for unbelief shuts up the heart against the spirit; and ever opposes and resists the spirit, and never receives it. But faith opens the heart to receive the spirit.

By faith we lay hold on Christ in the word; and through our union with Christ, we obtain the spirit. For we have not the spirit immediately in itself, but in the flesh of Christ. And when we, by faith, are made the flesh of Christ, then we partake of that Spirit that dwells in the flesh of Christ.

Now through these two things, the word and faith, the spirit communicates to us a new birth; it begets us unto God: and so we, partaking of the nature of God, partake also of the Spirit of God. They that are born of men, have nothing in them but the spirit of men; but they that are born of God, have the Spirit of God. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, and hath no spirit in it; but that *which is born of the spirit, is spirit*, and hath spirit in it. So that there is no means to partake of the Spirit of God,

but by being born of God: and the means by which we are born of God, are the word and faith.

3. Means is prayer. For Christ hath said, *the Spirit is given to them that ask.* And the disciples when they were to receive the promise of the Spirit, *continued with one accord in prayer and supplication*, Acts i. 14. For God, who hath promised to give us his Spirit, hath commanded us to ask it; and when God hath a mind to give us the Spirit, he puts us in mind to ask it: yea, God gives us the Spirit, that by it we may ask the Spirit, seeing no man can ask the Spirit, but by the Spirit. Now in asking the Spirit, there is no difference, whether we ask it of the Father or of the Son, seeing the spirit proceeds from both, and is the Spirit of both. And therefore Christ promiseth the sending of the Spirit from both. From the Father, *John* xiv. *The Spirit which the Father will send in my name.* From himself, John xvi. *Except I go, the Comforter will not come: but if I go, I will send him to you.* So that both the Father and the Son give the spirit; and it is no matter whether we ask him either of the Father, or of the Son, so we ask him of the Father in the Son, or of the Son in the Father.

And thus you see the way to obtain this power, is to obtain the spirit; and also by what means this is done.

2. The way to increase this power, is to increase this spirit. And therefore it is as needful for us to know the means to increase the spirit, as to receive it. And they among others are these.

1. To increase faith. For the more we believe, the more we receive of Christ; and the more we receive of Christ, the more we receive of the spirit in Christ. For faith doth not apprehend bare Christ, but Christ with his Spirit, because these are inseparable. Now always, according to the measure of Christ in us, is the measure of the spirit:

and according to the measure of faith, is the measure of Christ in us.

2. To be much in prayer. For the prayer of the spirit, increases the spirit. The more we have the spirit, the more we pray; and the more we pray, the more we receive the spirit. So that when we have the spirit in truth, we shall have daily a greater and greater increase of it, till we be filled with the spirit. For the Spirit comes from Christ, in whom is the fulness of the spirit, and carries us back again to Christ, that we may receive still more of the Spirit. And so by the spirit that is in our hearts, we lay hold on the Spirit that is in Christ, and receive more and more of it.

3. To turn ourselves daily from the creature to God. For the more we enlarge our hearts towards the creature, the less capable are we of the Spirit of God. For to live much upon the creature, is to live much according to the flesh, and this quenches and straitens the spirit in us. And therefore we must live abstractedly from the creatures: and so use them, as if we did not use them: and so mind them, as if we did not mind them; and abandon the contents and satisfactions of flesh and blood, and wean ourselves from all things but the necessities of nature. And the more free and loose we are from the creature, the more capable are we of God's Spirit, and the operations of it. He that lives at greatest distance from the world, and hath least communion with the things of it, hath always the greatest proportion of God's Spirit. For as the apostle saith, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father* (that is, the Holy Spirit) *is not in him:* so, if any man love the Father, the love of the world is not in him: now the more any one loves the Father, the less he loves the world; and the less he loves the world, the more the spirit dwells in him.

4. To cease daily from our own works. The more we

act ourselves, the less doth the spirit act in us. And therefore we must from day to day, cease from our own works, from the operations of our own minds, and understandings, and wills, and affections, and must not be the authors of our own actions. For we being flesh ourselves, whatever we do is fleshly, seeing the effect cannot be better than the cause. And if we mingle the works of our flesh, with the works of God's Spirit, he will cease from working in us. But the less we act in ourselves, according to the principles of our corrupt nature, the more will the spirit act in us, according to the principles of the Divine nature. But our own works are always a mighty impediment to the operations of the Spirit.

5. To increase the Spirit in us, we must give up ourselves to the Spirit, that he only may work in us, without the least opposition and resistance from us. That, as the soul acts all in the body, and the body doth nothing of itself, but is subject to the soul in all things: so the spirit may do all in us, and we may do nothing of ourselves without the spirit, but be subject to the spirit in all its operations. For the Spirit of God cannot work excellently in us, except it work *all in all* in us. And in such a man, in whom the spirit hath full power, the spirit works many wonderful things, that he, according to human sense, is ignorant of. For as the soul doth secretly nourish, and cherish, and refresh the body, and disperses life and spirits through it, even when the body is asleep, and neither feels it, nor knows it: so the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the soul, by a secret kind of operation, works many things in it, for the quickening and renewing it, whilst it oftentimes, for the present, is not so much as sensible of it.

6. The sixth means to increase the spirit, is to attribute the works of the Spirit to the Spirit, and not to ourselves. For if we attribute to the flesh, the works of the

Spirit; and take from the Spirit the glory of his own works, he will work no longer in us. Wherefore we must ascribe unto the Spirit the whole glory of his own works, and acknowledge that we ourselves are nothing, and can do nothing; and that it is He only that is all in all, and works all in all: and we ourselves, among all the excellent works of the Spirit in us, must so remain, as if we were, and wrought nothing at all; that so, all that is of flesh and blood may be laid low in us, and the spirit alone may be exalted: first to do all in us; and then, to have all the glory of all that is done.

And thus you see the means to increase the spirit, and so consequently strength, as well as to get it. And by the daily use and improvement of these means, we may attain to a great degree of spiritual strength, that we may *walk and not be weary*, and may *run and not faint*, and may mount up as eagles, yea, and may walk as angels among men, and as the powers of heaven upon earth; to His praise and honour, who first communicates to us his own strength, and then, by that strength of his own, works all our works in us: and thus is He glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

UNIFORMITY EXAMINED,

WHETHER IT BE FOUND

IN THE GOSPEL,

OR

IN THE PRACTICE OF THE CHURCHES

OF

CHRIST.

BY WILLIAM DELL,

Minister of the Gospel.

UNIFORMITY EXAMINED.

2 COR. IV. 13.

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

OBSERVING that our brethren of *Scotland*, together with the *Assembly of Divines*, and the rest of the Presbyterian judgment, do often, both in their discourse and writings, exceedingly press for uniformity; I have been urged in my spirit to think upon the matter, and to consider whether there could be any such thing found in the word of the New Testament, or in the practice of the churches of Christ. And for my part, I ingenuously profess, I cannot yet discover it: and would be glad if any would instruct me further in this particular, so he do it from the word.

Now, uniformity, what is it, but "an unity of form?" and the form they mean, no doubt, is outward: for the inward form, as it cannot be known by the outward senses; neither can in it be accomplished by outward power. And therefore, till I know their meaning better, I conceive, that by uniformity, they understand an unity of outward form in the churches of God; yea, some of them do declare so much, calling the thing they would have, external uniformity.

Now such a thing as this (after so much meditation and recollection, as my other employments, and the many dis-

tractions that necessarily attend my present condition, will permit me) I cannot discern, in the word of the gospel. For Christ, speaking of the church of the New Testament, saith, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and Truth*, John iv. 23. In which words it is most evident, that the worship of God in the time of the New Testament, is inward and spiritual, consisting in faith, hope, love, and in prayer, which is the operation of the three former, &c. And so, is so far from uniformity as it hath been explicated, and as they understand it, that it is not at all capable of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder at the strange workings of darkness in the minds of men, who would have an external uniformity, in a worship that is inward and spiritual; and of which, the outward form is no part at all, but is merely accidental, and so absolutely various.

Again: as I find not this uniformity in the doctrine of the gospel, so neither in the practice of the Saints, who had the spirit of the gospel, as that practice is represented to us in the word.

In *Acts* i. 14. I read, how the apostles being together with the women, and *Mary* the mother of Jesus, and his brethren, *continued, with one accord* or mind, in *prayer and supplication:* and *Acts* ii. 44, and 46. how *all that believed were together, and continued daily, with one mind in the temple, and did break bread from house to house, &c.* And in all this there was unity, but no external uniformity, neither name nor thing. Again, *Acts* iv. 23. *Peter* and *John* being let go by the magistrates, *went to their own company*, (which many of our clergy would term a conventicle) *and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them; and when they heard it, they lift up their voice to God, with one mind, and prayed.*

Here was inward unity, in faith, and love, and spiritual prayer, but no external uniformity; and verse 32. *The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and one soul.* Unity still, but nothing of external uniformity. Further, we read, *Acts*, chap. vii. and chap. viii. that *Stephen* and *Philip*, who, by the church were ordained decons, and were to serve only for the ministry of the table, yet by virtue of the anointing, preached the word of God freely, and powerfully: and how all the members of the church of *Jerusalem*, who were neither ministers nor deacons, being scattered abroad by persecution, went preaching the word every where where they came, in that case of necessity: the unction of the spirit, of which all believers partake alike, being one fundamental ground of such ministry, where there are no believers to call to the office: and in this, though there was unity of faith, spirit, and doctrine, yet I am sure they will say, there was no such uniformity as they would have. Again, *Acts* xx. *Paul*, the first day of the week, preached to the disciples of *Macedonia*, from the evening till midnight, (which Dr. *Pocklington*, in a printed sermon, saith, was out of order) and after, brake bread, and did eat, and talked with them a long while, till break of day: and going from thence, he arrived at *Ephesus*, and there called the elders of the church together, and appeals to them after what manner he had been with them, to wit, *serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, &c.* and how *he had held back nothing profitable for them, but had taught them publicly, and from house to house*, (which I wish were more in use now-a-days, if it might obtain so much leave from uniformity) *and had preached to them repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ:* our chief work towards God, since our fall and corruption, being repentance, which is the change of the creature towards God, through God's own work in the creature: and this is not done without

the sorrow of the flesh; and our chief work towards Christ, who is given to us as a head, being faith or union. And in the end, exhorts the presbyters *to take heed to themselves*, who, (according to the church-principles of this age, want no admonition themselves, seeing they are become a peremptory rule to all others) *and to the flocks over which the Holy Spirit* (and not patrons) *had made them overseers, to feed the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood, &c.* But in all this, neither practises himself, nor preaches to them, nor commands them to preach to others, or impose upon others any such kind of thing as external uniformity. And so surely, they that so vehemently urge this thing, that they make it all in all in their reformation, have some other teacher than the apostle, who being taught of Christ, as Christ was taught of God, yet knew no such thing at all in the worship of God, as uniformity.

And yet further, that the world, if it be possible, may be the more convinced, observe a little more seriously the practice of Christ and the saints, in reference to this point, and you shall see nothing of external uniformity. See this in the prayer of Christ, (prayer for the duty itself, being nothing, but so much spiritual worship, as being the voice of the Spirit in the flesh, both in head and members) this, Christ sometimes performed with his eyes lifted up to heaven, sometimes being prostrate with his body on the earth, and so several times, several ways: and as he, so the saints have; some prayed standing and lifting up their hands, as *Moses;* some kneeling and lifting up their hands, as *Solomon;* some standing and not lifting up their eyes, as the *Publican*, &c. And what external uniformity in all this? And as for praying, so for preaching; Christ sometimes preached in a ship, sometimes on the shore, sometimes in the city Jerusalem, sometimes in the Temple, sometimes in the desert, sometimes early, sometimes late; as if he intended on purpose to witness against

that piece of the mystery of iniquity, which in after ages should be called uniformity. So *Paul* preached, sometimes on the Jew's sabbath, sometimes on the first day of the week, sometimes each day of the week, sometimes in the day, sometimes in the night; sometimes prayed in the house, sometimes on the shore: he circumcised *Timothy* among the weak, refused to circumcise *Titus* among the perverse; became as a *Jew* to the *Jews*, as a *Greek* to the *Greeks*, to the weak as weak, to the strong as strong, all things to all men, that he might win some: and what external uniformity was here? And then for the Sacraments, Christ administered the Sacrament of the supper immediately after supper; *Paul* at midnight, and it may be, others in the morning, or at noon: and what external uniformity in all this? And for government; sometimes the apostles met together into a council, and in that council ordered things, not of their own heads, or by plurality of voices, but by the word and spirit; and what they ordered by the word and spirit, they put in execution by the power of the word and spirit, and not by the power of the world. At other times, ministers and believers did things by the word and spirit among themselves, by the mutual consent of both; or else believers alone among themselves, if there were no ministers present. And where the number of believers were more, they stood in need of more officers: and where fewer, of fewer officers; and all these things, are the free ordering of the churches, who have Christ, the Spirit, and the Father, among them, and in them, and so are taken out of the bondage of men, into the freedom of God. That truly I see not the gospel more setting its spirit against any thing of antichrist, than against this point of external uniformity. For if we have one Lord, Christ, Spirit, Faith, Baptism, and God, all other things are free to the churches, as God shall order by them, and no otherwise; and the reason, and wisdom, and

prudence of man, have no place in this world, where the *Sun of righteousness* shines, as the only light.

But against this that hath been said, do lie some objections; as first,

The prophet foretold that *the Lord should be one, and his name one*, and doth not this imply external uniformity?

I answer, nothing less: for the apostle explicates plainly and clearly, what it is to have the *Lord one*, and his *name one*, among believers, *Ephesians* iv. 4, 5, 6. where he saith, there is in the spiritual church, *one body, and one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in all.* Where you see, that among believers there is a manifold unity, but no external uniformity; yea, the prayer of Christ the Son, for the church, unfolds clearly the promise of God the Father to the church, *John* xvii. Christ prays, *that they all* (who are many among themselves, according to the flesh) *may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*, (that is, according to the unity of the spirit, not external uniformity) *that after this manner they also may be one in us.*

But again, it is objected out of 1 *Cor.* xiv. that the apostle requires that *all things may be done in the church, decently, and in order:* and doth not this imply external uniformity?

I answer, that they will hardly admit in their parish-churches, such a decency and order as the apostle there means, neither are they capable of it. For he saith before, *when the whole church is come together into some place, that all may prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted:* and that during this exercise of prophesying, if any thing be revealed to another, the former to give place: and he must speak that hath the clearest light, seeing the spirit, to whomsoever it is given, it is given to profit withal. And that though all may prophesy one by one, yet all

may not prophesy at once, for then it would not be order, but confusion, which the apostle would have avoided, saying, *Let all things be done decently, and in order.* And this decency too, he persuades to by the word, he doth not enforce by secular power: and if they will call this uniformity, for believers to prophesy one after another, according to the variety of the gifts of the spirit, and not many, or two or three at once, or the same time, we willingly agree with them: but how far this thing is from their sense, every one knows.

Thus you see these objections answered, and I am confident there are no more can be brought, but may as clearly and easily be answered as these.

And therefore, I say, I wonder, and wonder again, that we having covenanted and agreed together solemnly, to endeavour for a government most agreeable to the word of God, should in the mean time be left so void of the spirit and light of the gospel, as to fall upon external uniformity, which is no-where to be found in the gospel, nor in the practice of primitive Christians.

Yea, while I consider more seriously of the matter, methinks external uniformity is a monstrous thing, how glorious soever in their eyes; and not to be found either in nature or in grace, either in Christ's kingdom, or the kingdoms of the world.

In nature is no external uniformity extended to all the works of nature; for look into the world, and see if there be not variety of forms; heavenly and earthly bodies, having several forms; and in the earth, each bird, beast, tree, plant, creature, differs one from another, in outward form. If the whole creation should appear in one form, or external uniformity, what a monstrous thing would it be; nothing differing from the first chaos! But the variety of forms in the world, is the beauty of the world: So that

though there be a most admirable unity among all the creatures, yet there is nothing of external uniformity.

Again, as there is no external uniformity spread over the great world, so nor yet over the little world, or man. For look upon a man consisting of head and members, unto which the apostle compares the church, and you shall not find all the members like one another, neither in regard of their outward forms, nor operations: for the hand doth not move as the foot, nor the foot act as the hand; and if all the members should appear and act in one form, what a monster would a man be! and yet among the members, though there be no external uniformity, yet there is admirable unity.

And yet again, look into the kingdoms of the world, and you shall see no such thing in them as external uniformity: Here in *England* you shall observe that *York* is not governed as *Hull*, nor *Hull* as *Halifax*, nor that as *Bristol*, &c. neither is one county governed uniformly as another; there is no uniformity in the government of *Kent* and *Essex;* nor one town governed like another; in *Godmanchester*, the youngest son inherits; in *Huntingdon* the eldest: nor one corporation governed like another, nor one company in the city governed as another; and yet between all counties, cities, towns, corporations, companies, there is unity, though no external uniformity. Yea, look upon the famous city of *London*, and there are, it may be, an hundred thousand families, or more in it, and each one governed after a several manner; and among all these families there is no external uniformity, and yet they all agree well enough in the unity of a city.

Nay, further, to bring but one man to an uniformity of life and practice, by an outward law, would be the most absolute tyranny in the world, and make his life worse than death. To compel every man by law, every day in the week, or every Monday, Tuesday, &c. in the week,

to an uniformity of life, that he shall rise at the same time, use the same postures, speak the same words, eat the same food, receive the same physic, sit, and stand, and walk, and lie down at the same set times, who ever heard of such a cruel bondage? What an absurd and intolerable thing then is uniformity in the life of a man, taking away all freedom of the soul? But how much more evil and intolerable is uniformity in the life of a Christian, or of the true churches of Christ, taking away all freedom of the Spirit of God, who being one with God, works in the freedom of God, and is not to be bound with any authoritative or coercive power, of poor, dark, ignorant, vain, foolish, proud, and sinful men?

What now then do the Presbyters mean by uniformity? Would they have the word preached, and the Sacraments administered, and the name of God called on, and all this done in spirit and in truth, in the churches of Christ? this truly is unity, and not uniformity; and such an unity as no man can compel. But would they have the word preached, the name of God called on, Sacraments administered, the spiritual discipline of the spiritual church managed, the virtues of Christ, and graces of the spirit in the saints exercised, and all this in one and the same outward form, or uniformity? This is the burden of the saints, the bondage of the church, the straitning of the Spirit, the limiting of Christ, and the eclipsing the glory of the Father. And how wise soever these men may be in natural and carnal things, yet their wisdom is but foolishness in spiritual things, in which there is no more uniformity than in the workings of the Spirit, who works severally in several saints, and severally in the same saints, at several times: And therefore they that would tie the church to an uniformity, which works not of itself, but as the Spirit works in it, let them, first tie the Spirit to an uniformity, and we are contented. But these men seem to run a sad hazard, who would thus re-

duce the workings of the Spirit, in Christians and churches, to an outward uniformity, according to their own mind and fancy, and so would rule and order, and enlarge and straiten the Spirit of God by the spirit of man: seeing it is worse to sin against Christ in the Spirit, than against Christ in the flesh.

And therefore, till I be otherwise taught by the word, I cannot conceive that there ought to be, or is possible to be, any such external uniformity in the churches of Christ, as these men strive, and contend for; I will not say are ready to fight for: but that several churches of Christ, having unity of doctrine, faith, the spirit, ordinances, &c. may have divers forms of outward administrations, as God and Christ by the Spirit shall lead them; and that every church is in these things to be left free, and no church forced by any outward power, to follow or imitate another church, against its will, not being freely led unto it by the Spirit of God.

Neither do I think that God hath set up any company of men, or synod in the world, to shine to a whole nation, so that all people shall be constrained to follow their judgment, and to walk by their light: seeing other ministers and Christians may have more light and spirit than they. Neither hath Christ promised his presence and Spirit, to ministers more than to believers, nor more to an hundred, than two or three: And if two or three Christians in the country, being met together in the name of Christ, have Christ himself, with his word and Spirit among them, they need not ride many miles to the Assembly at *London* to know what to do, or how to carry and behave themselves in the things of God. And therefore, for any company of men, of what repute soever, to set up their own judgment in a kingdom, for a preremptory rule, from which no man must vary, and to compel all the faithful people of God, who are the very members of Jesus Christ him-

self, to fall down before it, upon pain of being cast into the burning fiery furnace of their indignation, heated seven times more hot than ordinary, through the desired access of secular power to their power, is a far worse work, in my eyes, than that of king *Nebuchadnezzar's* setting up a golden image, and forcing all to fall down before it; seeing spiritual idolatry, is so much worse than corporal, as the spirit is better than the flesh.

And therefore I do think (let them teach me better by the word that can) that uniformity, the great *Diana* of the Presbyterians, and the image that falls down from the brain and fancy of man, hath no footing in the Scriptures, or in the practice of the churches of Christ: And that the Presbyterian uniformity, is near akin to prelatical conformity, and is no other than the same thing under another word, after the manner of prelacy and Presbytery; and to conclude that unity is Christian, uniformity antichristian.

And this I have only hinted, and that briefly, among many occasions, to discover to the faithful, that some of the very dregs of antichristianism still prevail and domineer, under the very name of reformation: and also to give occasion to men of more spirit and abilities, and leisure, to discourse more fully to this point, that the serpent's head of formality, which is so carefully nourished by human reason, may be crushed in pieces by the power of the word.

1 John, ii. 27.

The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man should teach you: but, as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie: and even as it hath taught you, you shall abide in him.

The spiritual church is taught by the anointing, the carnal church by councils.

THE

BUILDING, BEAUTY, TEACHING,

AND

EMBELLISHMENT,

OF THE

TRULY CHRISTIAN AND SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

BY WILLIAM DELL.

MATT. v. 11, 12.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

PSAL. lxix. 9.

The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH CHAPTER OF ISAIAH,

FROM VERSE ELEVENTH TO THE END.

The words are thus:

Ver. 11. *O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempest, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.*

12. *And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones, &c.*

THIS place of scripture is very useful to the church of God, in these times wherein we live; yea verily, this prophet did not so much prophesy to his own age as to ours, nor to the Jewish church, as to the Christian. *For unto them it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you*, 1 Pet. i. 12.

The prophet *Isaiah* prophesied in the spirit, touching the kingdom of Christ, which stands not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; and delivers from the Father, by the Spirit, many excellent promises, to be fulfilled in the Son incarnate, head and members.

The first promise in this chapter, is touching the great increase of the church, in the days of the New Testament; that whereas, before, the church was to be found but in *one kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, Rev. v. 9.

now, it should be gathered out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* And this is so desirable and comfortable a thing, that in the beginning of the chapter, he calls upon all to rejoice at this; *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and shout aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate, than of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations. Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.* Isai. liv. 1, &c. So that there shall certainly be a most wonderful, and numerous increase of the faithful, in the Christian church, till they become as the stars of heaven, and as the drops of the morning dew, that cannot be told, all of them assembled in the beauties of holiness.

And therefore let us not be overmuch troubled, though at present we see, in a numerous nation, but few true children of the spiritual church; for God shall bless these few, and bid them increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth; so that though the assemblies of the saints be now but thin, and one comes from this place, and another from that, to these assemblies; and in many and most places of the kingdom, these few are fain to come together secretly, for fear of the *Jews*, that is, the people of the letter; yet through the pouring forth of the Spirit, it shall come to pass, at last, that they shall come in flocks, *and as doves to their windows.* And it shall be said to the church, by the Lord, *Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold, all these gather themselves together, and come to thee: As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doth,* &c. till at last the church shall say in her heart, *Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and*

removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone; these, where had they been?

Yea, these very promises are now in the very act of accomplishing among us; for the spiritual church hath received a very great increase within these few years, and God hath many faithful people in many places of this kingdom.

And one thing that is remarkable, touching the increase of the church at this day, is this: That where Christ sends the ministration of the Spirit, there many young people are brought in, to Christ; as being most free from the forms of the former age, and from the doctrines and traditions of men, taught and received instead of the pure and unmixed word of God: whereas many old professors, who are wholly in the form, prove the greatest enemies to the power of godliness: and thus, *the first are the last, and the last first.*

Now this great and sudden increase of the faithful, is that which doth so exceedingly trouble the world, and makes them angry at the very heart. For, if they were but a few, mean, contemptible and inconsiderable persons, whom they might easily suppress and destroy, they would be pretty quiet: but when they begin to increase in the land, as *Israel* did in *Egypt*; and, notwithstanding all the burdens of their task masters, wherewith they are afflicted and grieved, do yet increase abundantly, and multiply, and wax exceeding mighty, till they begin to fill the land; and when they consult to deal wisely with them, lest they multiply too much, do yet see them grow and multiply the more, that they know not at what country, or city, or town, or village, or family, to begin to suppress them: this is that which doth so exceedingly vex and enrage the world, and makes them even mad again, as we see this day. For the increase of the faithful, as it is the glory of the church, so it is the grief and madness of the world.

But these men in vain attempt against this increase of the faithful, as the *Egyptians* against the increase of the *Israelites;* for none can hinder the increase of the church, but they that hinder God from pouring out his Spirit; and according to the measure of God's pouring forth the Spirit, is and must be the increase of the church, in despite of all the opposition of the world.

And thus much touching the first promise of the church's increase.

Now in the words I read to you, the Lord comes to another promise: so that the Lord, because of the church's weakness, adds one promise to another; and these promises are nothing but the outgoings and manifestations of his love, through the word, Christ. But to look more nearly upon the words.

Ver. 11. *O thou afflicted.*

Affliction in the world, doth so inseparably attend the church, that the church even takes its denomination from it, *O thou afflicted.* The condition of the church, is an afflicted condition. For the church being born of God, and born of the Spirit, is put into a direct contrariety to the world, which is born of the flesh, and is also of its father, the devil. And so, the whole world is malignant against the faithful and spiritual church; and all that are not regenerate, set their faces, yea, their hearts and their hands, against the saints; and the unregenerate world, is against the regenerate; and the carnal world, against the spiritual; and the sinful world, against the righteous; and all the people and nations in the world, are against that people and nation which the apostle calls, *a holy nation*, and *a peculiar people.*

As the world cannot endure God in himself, so neither can it endure God in the saints; and so the more God dwells in the saints, the more doth the world afflict the

saints; for they oppose not the faithful for any thing of flesh and blood in them, but because that flesh and blood of theirs is the habitation of God, and the very presence of God himself is there: as he saith, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* Agreeable to this is that of Christ, where he saith, *All this shall they do to you, for my name's sake;* that is, when the name of Christ is called upon us, and we are taken into his name, that is, into his righteousness, and life, and truth, and wisdom, and holiness; and into his nature, which comprehends all this; then, when the world perceives the name of God in the sons of men, and the nature of God in the natures of men, then presently they fall a persecuting the saints, for this name and nature's sake: and he that strikes at God in his saints, would, if he could, strike at God in himself. And therefore let the world take heed what they do in this point; for while they persecute the saints, they are found fighters against God himself, because God is one with them, and they are one with God in Christ. And let the saints be admonished, so to hide and retire themselves into God through Christ, that whoever is an enemy to them, and opposes them, may rather be an enemy to God, and oppose God than them, they living and acting in God, and not in themselves.

Now this affliction the church meets with in the world, is profitable for the church; it is good for it that it should be afflicted: for the more it is afflicted in the flesh, the more it thrives in the spirit: this affliction stirs us up to the exercise of our faith and prayer: yea, then is our faith most active and vigorous, and our prayers most fervent, till they fill the whole heavens again; then are we most in the use of the word; then are we set off furthest from the world; then do we keep closest to God; then have we nearest intercourse and communion with him: so that we could better want fire, and water, and the sun, than want

affliction, which God, out of his mere love, through his over-ruling power and wisdom, causes to work unto us for good. So that we, who are placed in the hand of Christ, are set in such a condition, wherein nothing can do us any harm for ever, but evil itself must work good unto us. But we proceed.

Tossed with tempest.

Where we see that the church is not only afflicted, but violently afflicted; one wave comes against it after another, as in a tempest; and the more spiritual the church is, the more doth the world become as a raging sea against it; because the more spiritual the church is made, it is set in the more contrariety to the world, and the world to it. The psalmist describes this tempter in the world against the church; *They came upon me like a ramping and a roaring lion:* And again, *They came upon me, to eat up my flesh, as they would eat bread.* When the saints have appeared in the spirit, and acted in the spirit, how violent and enraged hath the world been against them? It would toss them, as in a tempest, from place to place, from post to pillar, as they say, till it hath quite tossed them out of the world. Yea, men naturally meek and moderate, how fierce have they become against the saints, when there hath appeared any glorious discoveries of Christ in them! For the enmity, that is in the seed of the serpent, against the seed of the woman, will be still breaking forth; and though it may for a time be covered under many moral virtues, and a form of godliness, yet when God leaves them to themselves, and lets them act outwardly according to their inward principles, how cruelly, and maliciously, and fiercely, and desperately do they act against the saints of God? Yea, there is not that enmity between *Turk* and *Jew*, as there is between carnal gospellers and spiritual Christians; the former hating these, and being angry

against these to the very death. And whenever the Lord shall suffer these to exercise their enmity against the church, then shall the church's condition become such as it is here described, *afflicted and tossed with tempest.*

And not comforted.

The church of God, in all the evil it meets with in the world, hath not one drop of comfort from the world: it hath affliction, tribulation, persecution, from the world; but no comfort.

This we see in Christ the head; you know what he suffered in the world in the days of his flesh; *he was despised and rejected of men*, and so full of sorrows, that he took his name from them, and was called, *A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:* At last, out of mere envy and malice, they apprehended him, bound him, buffeted him, spit on him, crucified him; and all this would have been but a small matter to have suffered from the heathen; but he suffered all this from the only visible church of God in the world; who put him to the most painful and shameful death of the cross, between two malefactors, to bear the world in hand, that he was the third, and the chief. And in all this evil he had nobody to pity him, or have compassion on him; but they laughed at him, and derided him, and mocked and jeered him; but nobody comforted him.

And as it was Christ the head, so it is with Christ the body and members; they, in all the evils, and woes, and sorrows, and oppositions, and persecutions they have from the world, have nobody to comfort them, or take compassion on them. *Refuge failed me*, saith *David*, *no man cared for my soul. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness*, saith *Heman*, Psal. lxxxviii. 18.

Brethren and beloved, ye that are partakers of the heavenly calling, and of the divine nature, if ever the Lord

suffer the world to prevail against you, to afflict you, and toss you from one evil to another, as in a tempest, to reproach you, throw you out of your comforts, banish you, imprison you, &c. you shall find nobody to comfort you; nobody will take notice of you, or regard you, or own you, or pity you, or be so sensible of your condition, as to say, "Alas! my brother."

You must look for affliction in the world, but you must look for no comfort there. When God shall cast us into sorrows and sufferings, let us not look for one worldly man to stand by us, no not of those that now smile upon us, and pretend friendship to us; no nor yet of our near relations; but then that shall be fulfilled, *I was a stranger to my brethren, an alien to my mother's children.* Nay yet further; they that are weak or worldly Christians, will stand aloof from thee, and will be shy to own, and countenance, and encourage, and comfort thee publicly. The disciples of Christ, when he was led to the cross, *they all forsook him, and fled,* and left him *to tread the wine-press alone.* And so, if you suffer in the righteousness and truth of God, you shall find little comfort from men. *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted!*

Now this the Lord doth, in much mercy to his saints; he leaves them destitute of earthly comfort, that they may look for heavenly; he leaves them destitute of all comfort from men, that they may look for comfort from God alone. And therefore when thou art brought into such a case, to be afflicted and not comforted, lift up thy heart to God, and expect all from him, saith Christ, *John* xvi. *The world shall hate you, and persecute you, and shall put you out of their synagogues, and shall kill you;* and in doing all this, shall think they *do God good service:* But, saith he, *I will send you the Comforter.* Christ knew well enough, that among all these evils, they shall have no comforter on

earth, and therefore promises to send them one from heaven.

And therefore, when thy soul is placed in affliction, never look after any earthly, or sensual, or creature comforts, for they will prove poison to thy soul; but only look for heavenly comforts, such as the Spirit brings, such as flow immediately from God; for these are pure, and sweet, and unmixed, and refreshing, and supporting, and satisfying, and enduring comforts; comforts that are able to make thee rejoice, not only in fulness, but in wants: not only among friends, but in the midst of enemies; not only in good report, but in evil report; not only in prosperity, but in tribulations; not only in life, but in death; they will make thee go singing to prison, to the cross, to the grave; they are mighty comforts, infinitely stronger than all the sorrows of the flesh: and hence it is, that many saints and martyrs have gone cheerfully to the stake, and sung in the very flames: the comforts of God in their souls, have strengthened them to this.

Thou that art a believer, and in union with Christ, never doubt of this comfort in thy greatest sorrows. When Christ had none to stand by him, and comfort him, God sent an angel from heaven to do it: And so, when we are left alone in the world, rather than we shall want comfort, God will send us an angel from heaven, to comfort us; yea, the Spirit itself, which is greater than all the angels in heaven; and we shall certainly be comforted by God, when we are *afflicted and tossed with tempest, and not comforted* by men.

Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, &c.

The Lord seeth the church in its affliction, without all comfort in the world, and then the Lord comes and comforts it himself; and this he doth by a promise. They are the sweetest comforts that are brought to us in the promises. The promises are the swadling-clothes of Christ,

they carry Christ wrapt up in them; and Christ represented to the church, hath been the comfort of it, in all its evils, outward or inward.

And therefore, whatever affliction takes hold on thee, have recourse to the promises, to draw thy comforts from Christ through them. O how sweet is that life that is led in the promises! a life led in the promises, is the best life in the world. Men that have estates in money or land depend on these things for their maintenance; but a Christian may have little or nothing of these in the world, but he hath a promise, which is a thousand times better, and makes his life more comfortable; *I am God all-sufficient;* and, *I will not fail thee nor forsake thee:* whereupon he comes to this resolution, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, I will trust in him.* O how sweet a life is this life, that knows no cares, nor fears, nor troubles, nor disquietments! here, saith a believer, is my estate, and living, and the lot of mine inheritance; and this is a thousand times better and more certain estate, than all the manors and lordships in the kingdom; for, my bread shall be given me, my waters shall be sure; *The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want;* no, not when the *lions* (the great men of the kingdom, to whom every poor man is a prey) *shall lack and suffer hunger.* He that hath given me his own nature and Spirit, will not leave me destitute of food and clothing.

Take another instance. A man, feeling the bitterness of affliction to flesh and blood, is ready to think, O how shall I ever be able to suffer this or that, or to part with my relations, with my estate, with my life, and all that is near and dear unto me? Why, when a Christian lays hold on the promise, *God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able.* O, saith a Christian, God will never bring me to any temptation or trial, but he will give me strength proportionable to it, or above it: and so lives satisfied with the truth, and goodness, and

power of God. And thus you see in these instances, that a life led in the promises, is the sweetest and best life; when a man can draw all from God himself, through a promise.

And this in general, That God comforts his church by a promise.

But to come more particularly to the words:

Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

The promise relates to the spiritual church of the New Testament; and this, you will observe, is often in scripture compared to a building, and that to a most stately, sumptuous, magnificent and glorious building; as being all built of precious stones, and so more glorious than the first temple, which was built up of common stones; and it was prophesied, that the glory of the second temple should far exceed the glory of the first. The first temple was *Solomon's*, which was indeed filled with the outward presence of God; but the second temple is the humanity of Jesus Christ, or the flesh of Christ, both head and members; this is the living *temple of the living God;* the temple that God hath built by his Spirit, for his own habitation; wherein God dwells truly, really, spiritually, and most nearly, by the way of the most near union, whereby God and the creature are knit together; and this spiritual temple is more glorious than the first material one, either according to the first edition of it by *Solomon*, or the second edition of it by the fathers, in the days of *Cyrus*, *Darius*, and *Artaxerxes*.

Here then you see, that the Lord promiseth to build up the church of the New Testament, with stones of fair colours, with precious stones. I will not stand to inquire

particularly into the natures of the several stones here named ; for the *Jews* themselves do not fully agree about them. It shall be sufficient for us to attain to the meaning of the spirit in this place, and that is this.

That the spiritual church of the New Testament, is not to be built with common, but with precious stones.

Now the full sense of these words I shall give you forth in several particulars.

1. You see here the matter of which the church of the New Testament is made ; and that is not of common, but of precious stones ; elect and precious stones ; and such are the faithful : For,

1. They have a more excellent nature than other men have ; for they are born of God, and so partake of the nature of God ; and so in this sense, may be said to come forth from God, as the child from the father : and the Lord Jesus did not more truly partake of the nature of man, than these do partake of the nature of God ; and therefore saith *Peter*, *Great and precious promises are made to us, that we should be partakers of the divine nature.* Others have only the nature of men in them, or which is worse, the nature of the devil : but the faithful have in them the nature of God, communicated to them through a *new birth.*

2. They have a more excellent spirit than others have ; as it was said of *Daniel*, that there was a more excellent spirit found with him, than with all the other wise men. Now the excellency of each creature, is according to the spirit of it : but the saints have the Spirit of God, even the Spirit of the Father and the Son dwelling in them ; they have the same Spirit of God dwelling in their flesh, as Christ had dwelling in his flesh : so that the very Spirit of God is found in the faithful, and therefore they are more glorious than the rest of the world.

3. They have a more excellent lustre than other men. One thing that appertains to the excellency of precious stones, is the lustre of them. Now this lustre in the faithful, is the glory of God upon them: *The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee*, saith *Isaiah* chap. lx. and *Paul* saith, *We all, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* So that as Christ was taken into the glory of the Father, so are we taken into the glory of Christ; as he saith, *And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them*, John xvii. for the head and members are taken into the same glory, according to their proportion.

4. They have more excellent operations; for the faithful are not such precious stones that are only for shew, but they also have some virtue in them, even the very virtues of Jesus Christ: for they, having the same nature and Spirit of God as he had, are able, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, to do the same works that he did; and so the saints are excellent, in the operations of faith, hope, love, humility, meekness, patience, temperance, heavenly-mindedness, &c. And in this respect also are more precious than the rest of the world. And therefore the Lord calls them his jewels; *In the day wherein I make up my jewels:* and elsewhere they are called the *precious sons of Sion.* The people of God are a most precious people, men and women of a precious anointing; though some wicked and scurrilous libellers against the spiritual church, will not allow them this name; but (according to the anointing they have received from satan) reproach it. And yet still it is a truth, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against.* That the truly faithful are precious stones in the building of the church, partaking of the nature and Spirit of God, and of the lustre and operations of both.

Whereas, on the contrary, other people are the vile of the earth, the true *filth and off-scouring of all things*, Psal. xv. *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned:* a man that is a natural man, a sinful and unregenerate man, who hath no other nature in him, but that corrupt nature he brought into the world, though in this present world he may be a gentleman, or a knight, or a nobleman, or a king: yet in the eyes of God and his saints, he is but a vile person; and a poor mean Christian, that earns his bread by hard labour, is a thousand times more precious and excellent than he, according to the judgment of God and his word.

And thus much for the first thing, the matter of which the church of the New Testament is made, that is, of precious stones.

2. Now the next thing observable, is the variety of these precious stones. For the spiritual church is not built up of precious stones of one sort only; not all of sapphires, nor all of agates, nor all of carbuncles: but of all these; both sapphires, agates, carbuncles, and many other precious stones of fair colours.

And this denotes the diversity of gifts in the saints of God. For though all of them are precious stones, yet they are of diversity of colours, and lustre, and operations: And this also makes for the greater glory of the church; for the variety of lustre adds to the beauty and ornament of it. In the body of a man, there is not one member, but many. If the body were all but one member, it would be but a lump of flesh; but the variety of members, with their several gifts and operations, are the glory of the body. And so it is in the church, the body of Jesus Christ, wherein are divers members, with diversity of gifts and operations, excellently set forth by Paul; *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit: And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh*

all in all. But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every one to profit withal: For to one is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another, faith by the same spirit; to another, the gift of healing by the same spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophesy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. Here, you see, are diversities of gifts, and administrations, and operations in the faithful; but all proceed from one and the same spirit: and whatsoever gift proceeds from the spirit, there is an excellent beauty, a heavenly lustre in it.

And therefore labour to distinguish between those gifts that are connatural to thee, and flow from thy own spirit, and those gifts that are supernatural, and flow from God's Spirit. In all the operations of thine own spirit, in all thy natural abilities, parts, wisdom, learning, actings, there is nothing but ungodliness, deformity, darkness, death; how specious soever they may appear to the world: but in the gifts and operations that flow from God's Spirit, there is a heavenly beauty, and lustre, and glory: yea, even in weak Christians, that are true Christians, you shall often see and discern an excellent beauty in some gift or other, which they have received from the spirit; which shines not forth so clearly in some stronger Christians. And therefore, let us not expect all gifts in all men, and that every man should excel in every gift; for then one would be saying to another, *I have no need of thee.* But God hath given diversity of gifts to divers saints, that each may acknowledge something in another, which he hath not himself, and may reckon his perfection to lie in his union and communion with them; that so the *communion of saints* may be kept up in the world, in despite of

the world. One Christian hath the gift of faith, another the gift of prayer, another the gift of utterance in preaching, another the gift of courage, another the gift of meekness, and the like; and no man hath all things in himself, that every man, in the sight of his own wants, may be kept humble. And this is a glorious thing in this building, that the lustre of each stone adds to the lustre of all; and the lustre of all is communicated to each stone: and so in the spiritual building, what one hath from the spirit, it is for all; and what all have, is for each one. If thou hast the gift of utterance in the ministration of the spirit, it is to build me up; if I have the spirit of prayer, it commends thee as carefully to God as myself: one watches over another, as over his own soul; and if any be weak, the strong support them; if any be doubtful, they that have the gift of knowledge direct them; if one be troubled, the rest mourn with him; if one be comforted, the rest rejoice with him; and they are all so linked together in the body of Christ, that the good and evil of one extends to all. Where thou canst find such another communion, there join thyself: but if this be the only excellent communion in the world, who would not willingly join himself to that spiritual people, where no man calls his grace his own, but all gifts are in common among all, every one having a share in the faith, hope, love, prayer, peace, joy, wisdom, strength of all; and all having a share in these gifts and graces, that are in any one? And thus much for the diversity of the stones, as well as the preciousness of them.

3. The third thing that reveals the sense of the words, is to observe, that this spiritual building of the church of the New Testament is made up all of precious stones, without any mixture of common stones; is made up of sapphires, agates, carbuncles; and adds, *and all thy borders of pleasant stones.*

Here then must be no mingling of the precious and the vile, the holy and the profane, the faithful and the unbeliever, the spiritual and the carnal; but all must be precious. If a man had a jewel, that had here and there only a precious stone in it, and all the rest common pebbles, there would be no great glory in such a jewel; but the common stones would take off from the lustre of the precious ones: And so the church is God's jewel in the world, and it must be made up only of precious stones, as you see here. And where are their eyes that perceive not this?

There be some that talk much against new doctrine, which is the old reproach of the gospel: but surely there was never newer doctrine than this, That the spiritual church of the New Testament should be made up of all the people that live in a kingdom; and that all that are born in such a nation, should necessarily be stones for the building up of the new *Jerusalem*. This is a new doctrine indeed, which neither the Old nor the New Testament owns; but was conveyed into the world by the spirit of *antichrist*. For God doth not now make any people, or kindred, or nation, his church; but gathers his church out of every people, and kindred, and nation: and none can be stones of this building, but those that are first elect, and after made precious through a new birth, and the gift of the Spirit. And this doctrine the word will justify against the world; for *Paul*, writing to the churches of *Ephesus* and *Corinth*, &c. doth he mean all the people that lived at *Ephesus* or *Corinth?* No, but the faithful and elect, children by adoption, saints by calling; and saith, *So it was meet for him to judge of them all.* And if any were mistaken for a saint that was none, surely he carried himself very like one; he was outwardly in sheep's clothing, or he had not been reckoned among the flock: and so, if a stone be

taken into this building that is not truly precious, yet it is so like one, in shew and colour, that it can hardly be discerned to be other, but by a very skilful lapidary. And indeed, such a mistake there may be in Christ's kingdom here, that a few counterfeit stones may be taken up among many precious ones: but that is the mistake of a false church, where a thousand counterfeit ones are taken in for one truly precious; wherein for one faithful Christian, there are many formalists, and many more profane. This is not such a building as the prophet speaks of; for this is all of elect and precious stones. But I cannot enlarge on these things, because this exercise I intend chiefly as an exposition: only I will add one or two things more touching this particular, and so go on.

1. If the church of the New Testament is to be built all of precious stones, what a building is that, where the only care is to keep these stones out of the building, lest by their glory and lustre they should darken the rest?

2. Consider, when the church shall be built up all of such precious stones, what a glorious church will that be, when the glory of the Lord shall shine forth in every stone of this building? How will there be then glory upon glory, till the glory of the church first darken, and then put out all the glory of the world?

3. Consider, what great enemies they are to the true and native glory of the church, that would have every man in a kingdom a member of the church, and would have those taken into the flock that are none of Christ's sheep; and those taken into the church of God that are not of God; and would gather up any stones to make up this temple of God. These are the men that would keep off those glorious things from being fulfilled in the church, which are spoken of it in the word.

4. We are to take notice, who is the builder of such a structure as this, all made up of precious stones: and you

shall find in the word, that *the builder and maker of it, is God. I will do it*, saith the Lord; *behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and I will lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates;* it is all God's work from the beginning to the end. For who can build unto God a living temple to dwell in, but himself? This the prophet speaks plainly, where he saith, *The man whose name is the branch, he shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build it.* It lies in the power of no man, to make such a building as this is. What wild and woful work do men make when they will undertake to be building the church, by their own human wisdom, and prudence, and counsel? When they think, we will have the church of God thus and thus; and we will make it up of such and such men; and we will govern it by such and such laws: and we will get the power of the magistrate to back ours: and then, what we cannot do by the power of the word and spirit, we will do by the power of flesh and blood: Poor men! that think that these new heavens wherein the Lord will dwell, must be the work of their own fingers; or that the new *Jerusalem* must of necessity come out of the assembly of divines at *Westminster*, which is *to come down from God out of heaven:* or that they can build the house of God, all of precious stones, whereas this must be God's own work, and his own doing; and no state or council in the world can bring this about. And after much trial, and pains, and weariness, the Lord will at last teach his own, that the gathering and laying these precious stones together, must be the Lord's own doing, even his own doing.

When the building of the church is left to men, how wofully is it managed! Why saith one, we must needs admit such a one, he is the chief man in the parish, or he is a man of good esteem in the world, or he is a nobleman, or he is my near kinsman, or is thus and thus related to me, or he is a good civil fair dealing man, and we must

needs admit him; and thus will flesh and blood be ever making a carnal temple for God to dwell in; but God's true habitation can never be framed but by the Spirit.

And therefore for the building of the church, let us look higher than the highest instruments; for it must be the Lord's own work by the word and spirit: and though every man be against it, and oppose it, yet the Lord will do it; when there are no hands to build it up, he will build it up without hands. *I will lay thy stones with*, &c. It follows.

Ver. 13. *And thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.*

See here, how the prophet by the spirit, carries up the saints above all visible and sensible things, even as high as God himself; *God* (saith he to the church) *shall build thee*, and *God shall teach thee; all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* The note is this: that all the true and genuine children of the church, have God's own teaching, in all the things of God, they have the Father and the Son, to teach them by the Spirit. This truth Christ himself confirms, where he saith, *It is written, that they shall be all taught of God; he therefore that heard and learned of my Father, cometh to me.* And again, *The spirit, when he is come, he shall lead you into all truth;* which doctrine, *John* afterwards preached thus: *The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man should teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things*, 1 John ii. 27.

Hereby now we perceive, how few true children of the church there be among those that are commonly called Christians; for among all these, how few are there who have the teaching of God? but most have their teaching only from men, and no higher.

Consider therefore, I pray, whether the knowledge you have, be from the teaching of God, or the teaching of

man ; you all pretend to know that Christ is the *Son of the living God:* and that redemption and salvation is by him alone ; but how came ye by this knowledge ? did you read it in the letter ? or did some-body tell you so ? or hath God himself taught you this ? *For no man knows the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father will reveal him ;* and therefore, when *Peter* said, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God ;* Christ answered, *Flesh and blood hath not taught thee this, but my Father which is in heaven.* And so, though all of you profess yourselves Christians, yet none of you know Christ truly, but only such as are taught of the Father. And this holds in all other points, as touching calling, and faith, and union, and justification, and sanctification, and the gift of sealing the Spirit, touching the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and the government of it. O consider, whether you have the teaching of God in these things or no ; and if you have not the teaching of God, you are none of the children of the church ; whatever truth thou knowest from the letter, if thou hast not the teaching of the Spirit, it will do thee no good ; thou knowest not any thing spiritually and savingly, wherein thou hast not the teaching of God. *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.*

And therefore, what a sad thing is it, when men look for their teaching no farther than men ? they only look to the minister, or to such an able, learned, orthodox man, as they phrase it ; or at the highest, to the Assembly ; and what they shall teach them, they are resolved to stand by it, and build upon it for their foundation ; in the mean time, never regarding, in truth, the teaching of God : but say, what, can so many grave, learned, godly men err ? and shall not we believe what they determine ? Why now, these are none of the children of the spiritual church ; for they neither have God's teaching, nor care for it ; but the spiritual church is all taught of God.

And great shall be the peace of thy children.

That is, when men are taught of God, then there is nothing but peace among them ; when God comes and teacheth thee, and me, and another, and many, then we all agree, because we are all taught of God, and see all things by the same light, and apprehend all things by the same Spirit, because all have the same teaching. And so they that are taught of God, though one come out of the *East*, and another out of the *West*, and another out of the *South*, and never had any former communion together, yet they all agree in the same truth, and think, and speak the same things ; and so, there is love and amity, and peace and unity among them, because they are all taught of God, and have learned the truth, not as it is in this or that man, or assembly of men, but as it is in Jesus.

And truly, this is the true ground of all the differences and dissensions, and heats that are in the kingdom at this time, to wit, because some are taught of God, and some are not taught of God, but men only : the carnal church is only taught of men, and goes no higher ; but the spiritual church is truly taught of God. Now they that are taught of God, and they that are taught of men, see the same truths with a great deal of difference, and hereupon arises the controversy and quarrel ; for one will have the truth as he sees it in the light of God ; another will have it as he apprehends it in his own fancy ; and the carnal man will not yield to the spiritual ; and the spiritual man cannot yield to the carnal. Saith one, this is the mind of God, and I have learned it from his own teaching : saith another, this is not the mind of God, for such a learned minister, or ministers, taught me otherwise, and so I apprehend it ; and thus, as the flesh and spirit are contrary, so are their teachings : and hence our divisions and troubles. But when men are all taught of God, then they are all at peace one with another, and all do agree in the substance

of the truth of the gospel; and if some do not know the same things they do, they can wait, with patience, till God also reveal that unto them; for they know with all their hearts, that they themselves could never have known those things, except God had taught them: and so they cannot be angry at others, whom the Lord as yet hath not vouchsafed to teach: and so they are meek and gentle towards all, as beseems the spirit, as well as at peace among themselves. *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children:* For they know, that no man is higher or lower than another in the kingdom of Christ, but are all equal in Jesus Christ; they know that no man can challenge Christ more to himself than another, but all have equal interest in him, and Christ is alike near to all in whom he dwells; yea, they all as willingly communicate their own things to the brethren, as they themselves do partake of Christ's things; and so there is nothing but peace. When men know that no man is any thing in himself, but every one is all that he is in Christ: and when men love Christ merely for himself, and where they see most of Christ, there love most; and if Christ be more in another than himself, can love such a one more than himself, not for his own sake, but for Christ's sake; then there is nothing but peace. *Great shall be the peace of thy children.*

Ver. 14. *In righteousness shalt thou be established, &c.*

This spiritual church had need of establishment; for, when God hath done all this for it, when he hath built it, and taught it himself, it shall not want trouble and opposition, and contradiction, and persecution in the world, and therefore it stands in great need of establishment. But how shall this be done? why saith he,

In righteousness shalt thou be established.

That is, not by any outward power or force, or armies, or fortifications, or factions, or confederacies; all these,

are but a staff of reed; but in righteousness; and that is, both in the righteousness of Christ received by us, and working in us: the first is, the righteousness of justification: the second is, the righteousness of sanctification, and our establishment lies in both.

1. In the righteousness of justification, which is called the righteousness of faith, or Christ's own righteousness, received into us: and in this sense it is said, *Except ye believe, ye shall never be established:* for by faith we partake of the righteousness of God through Christ; and this is an infinite and everlasting righteousness, that hath neither spot, nor blemish in it, this is able to establish us for ever and ever; so that the church hath no more establishment, than it hath of the righteousness of Christ by faith; as the church goes from faith to faith, so it goes from establishment to establishment.

2. Our establishment lies in the righteousness of our sanctification; which is nothing but Christ working in us, as the former was Christ dwelling in us; for the same Christ that is the righteousness of our justification, is the righteousness of our sanctification. Now the establishment of the church, is, when we let the righteousness of Christ work all in us, and we work all in the righteousness of Christ; then are we established mightily and invincibly indeed; and how much Christians swerve from this rule, so much they become weak and unsettled: sometimes Christians will be living out of Christ in themselves, and they will be moving, and acting, and working according to human wisdom and prudence, and the counsels and devices of flesh and blood, but in all this they have no establishment at all. And therefore, ye that are faithful, see to it, that ye turn aside neither to the right hand nor to the left, through any worldly hopes or fears; but do ye live and act in the righteousness of Christ: and as the Lord lives, though you have kingdoms and nations for your enemies,

you shall not be moved, but shall be established more firmly than the earth.

And therefore, I pray, consider your establishment, where it lies, and that is in righteousness, and in righteousness only. Some trust to this strength, and some to that, some to this aid, and some to that ; but the spiritual church scorns to trust to any creature for establishment, but looks to be established only in righteousness ; and because of this, neither men nor devils shall prevail against it. And therefore, you that are of this temple and building, which is made by God, seeing you have so many enemies on all hands, pray look to your establishment, which is in righteousness : *In righteousness shalt thou be established.*

Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee.

The fear and terror he speaks of here, is inward fear and terror, from which the church shall be free in the midst of all outward evils ; for though the church be full of danger and persecution without, yet it is free from fear and terror within ; nay, the church hath trouble without, but peace within ; affliction without, joy within ; weakness without, strength within ; imprisonment without, liberty within ; persecution without, content within ; against all the sorrows and sufferings of the flesh, they have refreshings, comforts, hopes, sweetnesses, rejoicings, triumphs in the spirit : and so in the midst of evil, are free from evil ; and in the midst of sufferings, are free from pain : yea, they rejoice in tribulations, and in the midst of evil are filled and satisfied with good.

Ver. 15. *Behold they shall surely gather together, but not by me ; whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake.*

A very strange thing it is, that the spiritual church, being thus builded, and taught and established, any should yet be so blind, and mad, as to engage against it ; and yet

the world, and the carnal church, especially doth this: yea, the more pure and spiritual the church is, the more enmity the world and formalists have against it.

Behold they shall surely gather together.

When they shall see the churches gathering together into the true communion of saints, then will they gather themselves together against the churches: And why do these men blame the churches, for gathering together unto Christ, when they themselves gather together against the church, as we daily see? Indeed, the gathering together of the saints, the world doth most hate of all other things: O, this is a dreadful and terrible thing to them; it makes their hearts ake within them, and looseth the joints of their loins; they think their exaltation will be their own abasement; and their gathering together, their own scattering; and their glory, their own shame; and their strength their own undoing; and out of these conceits, the world acts so strongly and furiously, to scatter abroad again Christ's own gatherings together. But the Lord hath decreed and promised, to hew that little stone of Christ's spiritual church, out of the mountain of the world, without hands, and will certainly accomplish it, and is now about that very business: but the world, that never looks beyond sense, they think this is surely a plot of ours, and that we have a great design in hand: and so we have indeed; but the design is not our design, but God's, contrived in eternity, and discovered to *Daniel* chap. ii. and this is the setting up a kingdom of saints in the world, under Christ the king of saints, wherein the people shall live alone in point of spiritual worship and communion, and shall have nothing to do with the rest of the nations. This counsel of God begins to be accomplished, and the world thinks that we are subtil, and we are mighty: whereas they are clearly mistaken in us; for the wisdom and strength whereby this is done, is God's,

and not ours. For it is the Lord must build this spiritual church, and set it up in the world, and preserve it against the world, and cause it to increase, till it fills the world; so that the design, and the accomplishment of it, belongs to God, and not to us; and they that are displeased at it, let them go and quarrel against God: and so they will certainly do, through the operation of the devil; *Behold*, saith he, *they shall surely gather together:* As soon as ever the church separates from the world, the world gathers together against the church.

Yea, this place is not only to be understood of those that are open enemies without the church, but of a generation in it, that are not of it; and so the gathering together against the church, shall be in the church: and so *Calvin* interprets; and such a thing will assuredly come to pass, that the church, as well as the kingdom, will have domestic enemies; it hath been so in all ages, and what wonder will it be if it be so in this? The first division in this kingdom, was between common profession, and open profaneness, and if ever there be another, it is like to lie between the form and power of godliness; and the *children that are born after the flesh*, will up, and be persecuting *them that are born after the Spirit;* and the deepest wounds we shall receive, will be in the house of our friends; not our friends indeed, but of such who seem to be so; for they pray as well as we, and preach, and hear, and receive the sacraments, and use the same ordinances with us; and yet their enmity, of all other, will be the greatest against us; and we shall receive deeper wounds in the houses of these friends, than in the streets of our enemies. They shall gather in thee, against thee.

But not by me.

The saints gather together by God, having the Spirit of God to bring them into union and communion: but the

carnal church gathers together against the spiritual, not by God, but without him, for worldly base ends and interests, and profits, and advantages. But mark the end of such gathering together:

Whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake.

For the Lord loves the church, the body of Christ, even as he loves Jesus Christ himself; *thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* He loves head and members with the same love. The Lord's people are his portion on earth, as he is theirs in heaven: and so he will give nations and kingdoms for them; and hath said, *The nations and kingdoms that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.* O that this kingdom in itself, and in its representation, would avoid this evil, as they would escape this end.

The four monarchies, for opposing the spiritual church, have fallen for its sake; and so shall every other kingdom and commonwealth, that undertakes against it!

Ver. 16. *Behold, I have created the smith, that blows the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.*

Ver. 17. *But no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, &c.*

Thou art, saith God to the church, a small, weak, despised, contemned, persecuted people; but thy safety, protection, blessing, lies in me, and in my power, and wisdom, and love.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.

God blunts the edge of the weapon, and weakens the hand, and puts fear into the heart of him that useth it; and so no weapons that have been used, have prospered hitherto; and if any more weapons shall be used hereafter, they shall be as unprosperous as these.

And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn.

Two ways you see the enemies of the church assault the church; by their hands, and by their tongues; and this latter way is the more dangerous of the two: by the former, they scourge the church with rods; by this latter, with scorpions. This weapon of the tongue, is the most dangerous weapon that ever was used against the church in any age, and the last refuge of the devil and his instruments to annoy the church. And thus, when the enemy fails at the strength of his weapons, he undertakes again with the malice of his tongue: and with this the enemy strikes against the saints that profess the truth, and against the truth itself, professed by the saints.

Against the saints that profess the truth, clothing them with odious names, and loading them with base aspersions; their tongues rise up in judgment against them; it intimates, they shall have specious pretences against the church. O these are the men, say they, that would turn the world upside-down, that make the nation full of tumults and uproars, that work all the disturbance in church and state; it is fit such men and congregations should be suppressed, and they should have no employments in church or state; it will never be a quiet world, till some course be taken with them, that we may have truth, and peace, and government again. And thus they have fair pretences against the godly, and use the glorious names of truth, peace and government, to the destruction of them all. And this is the sense of these words, for their tongues to rise up in judgment against them.

Yea, methinks this phrase intimates thus much, as if they would call in the aid and power of the secular magistrates against the spiritual Christians, and then their tongues rise up in judgment against them indeed; and except they engage the magistrate's power against the saints,

they think they can never do them mischief enough. And thus their tongues rise up in judgment against the saints that profess the truth.

2. As the enemy strike with their tongue against the saints that profess the truth, so also against the truth professed by the saints: and this they call by way of reproach, new light.

But see how God conquers this weapon of the enemy's tongue to the faithful, as well as the former weapons of their hands; *every tongue that riseth up in judgment against thee, thou shalt condemn.* All that reproach and slander, and vilify, and abuse the saints, either by their tongues or pens, thou, by thy uprightness, integrity, innocency, truth, and faithfulness, shalt condemn them; thy ways, and thy works, that are led and acted in Christ and his Spirit, shall be the condemnation of all thine enemies; and their misreports and slanders shall be done away as a mist before the sun; and thy righteousness and integrity shall break forth in that clearness, and brightness, and strength, that they shall sit down astonished and amazed: and they shall be condemned, not only by the word, and by the saints, but by all the common morality of the world, yea, and by their own consciences; so that they shall carry their guilt with them night and day, and shall not be able to look the godly in the face, whom they have so reproached; the very presence of the saints, shall be the condemnation of their enemies, who have before so unworthily judged them: yea, the whole world shall see the faithfulness and integrity of the saints of God, and shall justify them, and condemn their enemies; and shall say, Lo, these are the men that the world judged as sectaries, and schismatics, and what not! See how faithful they have been to God, and the true church of God, and to the state; and surely they must be bad men, that are enemies to these. And thus, while our enemies judge us, they shall be condemned them-

selves. And this shall certainly be done, as sure as the word of God is true, and as sure as the Lord lives, to make good his word. For,

This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

That is, you shall have this by as sure right as any man hath an inheritance, that is entailed upon him. This is your heritage, O ye servants of the Lord, to make void the force of every weapon that is used against you, and to condemn every tongue that judgeth you. This promise is our portion, and the lot of our inheritance; and in this we rejoice, that while we serve the Lord truly and faithfully, neither the hands nor tongues of the enemy shall hurt us, but in the end we shall be more than conquerors over all. *Let my portion fall in this pleasant place, and I shall have a goodly heritage.*

And their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

That is, these servants of mine, are not men of a human and moral righteousness only, but they partake of the righteousness of God in Christ; *Their righteousness is of me:* or thus, though they are sinners before the world (for as the world reckons their own sin for righteousness; so it reckons God's righteousness for sin,) yet they are righteous before me, and in my eyes. So that, however the world reckons us evil does, and not worthy to live in the world, yet God reckons us righteous, and our righteousness is before him.

To conclude: seeing God hath engaged himself to secure us in his ways, both from the weapons and tongues of men, *Go and tell the foxes, that we will walk without fear in the world, both to-day and to-morrow, and the third day we shall be perfected.*

RIGHT REFORMATION,

OR

THE REFORMATION OF THE CHURCH

OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT,

REPRESENTED

IN GOSPEL LIGHT.

IN A SERMON, PREACHED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH, 1646.

BY WILLIAM DELL.

Minister of the Gospel.

JOHN vii. 12.

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people.

JOHN xvi. 3.

And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

Credo me theologum esse christianum, & in regno veritatis vivere; ideo me debitorem esse, non modo affirmandæ veritatis, sed etiam asserendæ, & defendendæ, seu per sanguinem seu per mortem. *Luth.*

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

THE times we live in are dangerous times : it is dangerous to conceal the truth, and dangerous to publish the truth ; if we publish the truth God hath taught us, and we have heard and learned from the Father, we fall into the hands of men ; if we conceal it, we fall into the hands of God. And therefore in this case, in a contrary choice to *David*, I reckon it much better to fall into the hands of men, than into the hands of God ; seeing the wrath of men can but reach the body ; but the wrath of God body and soul. I shall therefore willingly confess Christ, amids an adulterous and sinful generation, not doubting but Christ will confess me before his Father, and before his angels. And for the reproaches of men, it is best conquering them, as *Luther* was wont to say, *Silendo & contemnendo*, by silence and contempt of them ; seeing a man may as easily restrain *Satan* himself, in his various workings, as stop the mouths of his instruments. And therefore it is good for us Christians, to do the work of God, without so much as taking notice of such men : and if sometimes we are sensible of these things, because we are flesh, yet as we are Christians, we are above them in the Spirit, and see already in certain faith and hope, all evils and enemies under our feet : And I am resolved, neither now nor hereafter to take them any more into consideration, than the business itself necessarily requires : and where they may be omitted without prejudice to the truth, to let them quite alone : being every day, through the use of affliction, enabled to patience, and through patience brought to experience, and so to a proportionable measure of hope : And this carries me above the shame of the world, in the strength of the love of God.

For the doctrine contained in this discourse, thou shalt not find it new light, (as some men slanderously affirm) but the ancient light that sprang forth in the first morning of the gospel, but was since obscured by the new darkness of Antichrist, which these men love better than that old light, and will by no means exchange the one for the other. But considering this light, that now,

after a long night, breaks forth again in some of its first glory, let these men set their hearts at rest; for they shall never be able to obscure it again; and the fire of the Spirit that God hath kindled in the kingdom, they shall never be able to quench with any fire, either of earth or hell. And therefore we fear them not, though they breath forth threatenings now, and ere long, are like to breath forth blood: For by all their subtil and industrious actings, in the end, they shall not work the truth's ruin, but their own. And these, as well as their forefathers, of the same race and lineage, in whose stead they are now risen up, shall, in due time, become a reproach and a shame, and their name shall be for a curse to all God's chosen.

Reader, it is my earnest desire, that the Lord would deliver thee from this new form of the mystery of iniquity, which in every age puts on a several form, when the old one is discovered by the light of the word. And in this present age, it is become so exceeding cunning, and so furnished with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, under the form of righteousness, that it seems to be the last and subtilest work of Antichrist that is now in hand; and he that prevails in this encounter, hath Antichrist under his feet for ever: but none are like to prevail here, but the faithful and elect alone.

And therefore hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown, Rev. iii. 11. and consider Christ's encouragement to this work in the following verse; *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God; which is, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

Christian reader, I commit thee, and the word now offered to thee in this discourse, to God, and his powerful blessing, and wonderful working; *Remaining*,

Thine in the difficult, and despised service of Jesus Christ in the gospel,

WILLIAM DELL.

RIGHT REFORMATION:

OR

THE REFORMATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

REPRESENTED IN GOSPEL LIGHT.

HEB. ix. 10.

Until the time of reformation.

THE natural man (saith *Paul*, 1 Cor. ii.) *knows not the things of the spirit, neither can he, for they are spiritually discerned.* Now, a man that is not *born of God and his Spirit*, with all his parts, abilities, reason, wisdom, prudence, learning, is but a natural man still, and so hath no right knowledge of the things of God and his Spirit.

And hence it hath come to pass, that the things of God and his Spirit have been so grossly and dangerously mistaken by the world, and the carnal church. For all the spiritual things of God they have understood carnally: and have apprehended the whole scriptures, not according to God's mind, but according to their own; not according to the sense of the spirit, but according to the sense of the flesh. An thus was antichrist's kingdom first set up, and thus it hath been kept up and continued; even by the carnal understanding of the scriptures. For they have understood the church, the kingdom of God in the world, carnally; the rock on which it is built, carnally; the door

of this kingdom carnally; the laws of it carnally; the liberties of it carnally; the power, authority, government, glory, officers, &c. all carnally. And to this very day, which of the things of God doth not the carnal church unstand carnally? Faith, hope, love, it understands carnally; redemption, adoption, justification, sanctification, glorification, union with Christ, communion of the Spirit, access to the Father, together with Christ the head, and the church the body, in their joint union and offices, and all other things, they understand carnally, and have a fleshly sense and apprehension of them.

And as they understand all other things of God's kingdom carnally, so also the reformation of it; and there is not greater and grosser mistakes about any of the things of God, than about this: men imagining the reformation of the church, which is altogether a spiritual and heavenly kingdom, after the manner of the reformation of worldly states and commonwealths, which only stand in outward things, and is brought to pass by human counsels, and human power.

Now because this is not only a gross, but a general error, in all sorts of people, both of high and low degree: I shall endeavour at this time, according to the good hand of God with me, to represent in some gospel-light to this honourable and Christian auditory, the true reformation of the church of the New Testament: And *blessed is he who shall not be offended at it.*

For this purpose I made choice of the words now read, *Until the time of reformation.*

For the better understanding of which, we must read the context.

Ver. 9. *The first tabernacle was a figure of the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience.*

Ver. 10. *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances* (it should be *righteousnesses or justifications of the flesh*) *imposed on them, until the time of reformation.*

In which words the apostle shews the imperfection of the worship of the old law, because it stood in outward rites, ceremonies, duties, performances, and so could not make him that used them, and was busied in them, perfect, as pertaining to his conscience; and therefore God did not simply and absolutely impose these things on the church, to continue for ever, but only until the time wherein all things were to be reformed, not only evil things, but imperfect. And then, all that outward religion was to be abolished.

Now if the law of *Moses* could not make men perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, much less can any new laws invented now. And if any such laws should be imposed on the people of God now, the gospel hath the same strength in itself to make them void, as the former; and also the same ground from them, because all such laws and ordinances devised by men, cannot make them that obey and practise them, perfect as pertaining to the conscience: and therefore, are all to be at an end, when the time of reformation comes.

Quest. Now if you ask me, when this time of reformation was?

Answ. I answer: It was when Christ came: not a servant, as *Moses*, but the Son, out of the bosom of the Father, the great prophet of the New Testament, whose doctrine was not letter, as *Moses's* was, but spirit and life. And now, when Christ, the minister of the New Testament, came with the ministration of the spirit, now was the time of reformation.

In the time of the law there were outward duties, and performances, and ceremonies, and sacrifices, and strict

laws to enjoin the observation of these things, carrying along with them the severity of death: and yet notwithstanding all this, there was no true reformation: but under all that outward religion, men were inwardly as corrupt and wicked as the very heathen: for all their circumcision in the flesh, they were uncircumcised in heart; for all their outward washing, they were inwardly unclean; for all their blood of bulls and goats, their sins remained in their natures and consciences; for all their strict forcing of men to the duties of the outward worship of God, the people still remained far from God, even in all those duties. So that, notwithstanding the outward worship of *Moses's* law, the people remained inwardly corrupt, filthy, and unclean, and without any true reformation before God; till Christ, who was God in the flesh, came with the ministration of the spirit, and then indeed was the time of reformation. *Until the time of reformation.*

The thing then the spirit would have us take notice of in these words, is this,

Doctrine. That the time of the gospel is the time of reformation.

Whenever the gospel is preached in the spirit and power of it, that is *the time of reformation.*

For our more orderly proceeding in this point, we will observe this method.

1. Show what true gospel-reformation is, and how it is qualified; that so you may the better distinguish it from political and ecclesiastical reformation. Now both these I join together, because the carnal church hath always interested and mingled itself with the power of the world, as being able to do nothing without it.

2. I will endeavour to shew, to whose hands the work of gospel-reformation is committed.

3. By what means he to whose hands it is committed, brings it about.

4. The advantages of such a reformation where it is wrought.

5. The use.

The first general.

What true gospel-reformation is, and how qualified.

1. What it is. It is the mortifying, destroying, and utter abolishing out of the faithful and elect, all that sin, corruption, lust, evil, that did flow in upon them, through the fall of *Adam*. Or,

It is the taking away and destroying the body of sin out of the faithful and elect, by the presence and operation of the righteousness of God dwelling in their hearts by faith. This is true gospel-reformation, and besides this I know no other. This the evangelical prophet *Isaiah* describeth, chap. i. 27. *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.*

Now Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, as he discovers, reproves, condemns, and destroys sin, so he is called judgment: and thus is judgment to be understood in the gospel sense, and not terribly, as in the sense of the law: and this judgment shall at last break forth into victory; that is, though Christ in us hath to do with many strong corruptions, and lusts in the soul, yet at last he prevails against them all, and judgment breaks forth unto victory: because Christ, the judgment of God in the soul, must needs, in the end, prevail against every sin of man.

Again; Christ the righteousness of God, as he makes us righteous with his own righteousness, and makes us the righteousness of God in him, so he is called Righteousness; not in himself only but in us: He is *the Lord our Righteousness:* and by this judgment and righteousness, is Zion and her converts redeemed and reformed. And so true gospel-reformation is the destruction of sin out of the faithful, by the presence of righteousness.

And therefore you see how grossly they are mistaken, who take gospel-reformation to be the making of certain laws and constitutions by the sacred power or clergy, for external conformity, in outward duties of outward worship and government, and to have these confirmed by civil sanction, and inforced upon men by secular power; when in the mean time, all that inward corruption and sin they brought with them into the world, remains in their hearts and natures, as it did before. After this manner the old prelates reformed, who were wont to say to the kings, "We will study out the faith, and you shall maintain it;" and the faith they studied and brought to the kings, the kings must maintain, and not question but that it was *Jure Divino.*

And thus you see in general, what gospel-reformation is, and that it is clear, it is a different thing from civil, ecclesiastical reformation.

2. Now in the next place, let us see how this gospel-reformation is qualified, whereby the difference between this and the other will appear yet more clearly.

First then, it is a spiritual reformation. For as the Kingdom of Christ is a spiritual Kingdom: so all the things that belong to it are spiritual things; and so is the reformation of it. A carnal reformation is not suitable to a spiritual kingdom. And spiritual it is, because it proceeds from the Spirit, and stands in spiritual things, as you shall see more fully anon.

But now the reformation of the civil and ecclesiastical state, is a carnal reformation, wrought by the powers of flesh and blood, and stands in outward and fleshly things, as you shall presently see.

Secondly, It is an inward reformation. For as the kingdom of God is an inward kingdom, *(the kingdom of God is within you)* so the reformation that belongs to it, is an inward reformation. This true gospel-reformation,

lays hold upon the heart, and soul, and inner man: and changes, and alters, and renews, and reforms that; and when the heart is reformed, all is reformed. And therefore this gospel-reformation doth not much busy and trouble itself about outward forms, or external conformity, but only minds the reforming of the heart: and when the heart is right with God, the outward form cannot be amiss. And therefore, saith Christ, touching the worship of the New Testament, *God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth;* but speaks not one word of any outward form. So that God, in this gospel-reformation, aims at nothing but the heart, according to the tenor of the new covenant. *This shall be the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*, Jer. xxxi. 33. so that they shall not only have the word of the letter in their books, but the living word of God in their hearts: and God, intending to reform the church, begins with their hearts; and intending to reform their hearts, puts his word there; and that living word put into the heart, reforms it indeed.

But now, civil ecclesiastical reformation is only outward, and busies itself in reforming the outward man, in outward things, and so is very industrious and elaborate about outward forms, and outward orders, and outward government, and outward confession, and outward practice; and thinks, if these be put into some handsomeness and conformity, they have brought about an excellent reformation: though the heart, in the mean time, remains as sinful, vile, and corrupt as ever, and so altogether unreformed.

And so this reformation is like that reformation of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, notorious hypocrites, *who made clean only the outside of the cup or platter; leaving them all filthy and unclean within: and whited over sepulchres, to make them beautiful outwardly, when inwardly they are full of rotten-*

ness and corruption. Matt. xxiii. 25. So civil ecclesiastical reformation makes a man clean outwardly, with an outward confession of faith, &c. when inwardly he is all filthy through unbelief; and whites him over with a few handsome forms of worship, when inwardly he is full of ignorance of God, and atheism.

Object. Now if any ask, But must there be no change of outward things in the reformation of the gospel?

Answ. I answer, yes; an outward change that flows from an inward; but not an outward change without an inward; much less an outward change to enforce an inward.

3. It is a thorough reformation; for it reforms the whole man; it reforms not the soul only, but the body too, and the very spirit of the mind: the spirit, as it animates, and quickens, and acts the body, is called the soul; as it is in itself, in its own nature and essence, so it is called the spirit of the mind: and this gospel-reformation reforms all; that is, both inward and outward, and outward and inward man; yea the inwardest of the inward man; and not only the operations of the soul in the body, but of the soul in itself.

But civil ecclesiastical reformation reforms by halves; it reaches the body, and orders that, but attains not to the soul, much less to the spirit of the mind.

Again; Gospel-reformation reforms sin wholly, as well as the man: it reforms all sin whatsoever: *I will turn my hand upon thee*, (saith God by this gospel-reformation) *and will purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.* Isai. i. 25. It reforms a man, not only of outward sins, but of inward. It reforms him of those sins that seldom come forth into the view of the world, as atheism, ignorance of God, pride, vain-glory, self-seeking, hyprocrisy, carnal-mindedness, and all the evil desires of the flesh, and of the

mind. Yea, it doth not only reform all evil things in us, but all imperfect things: doing away imperfect things by the coming of perfect things: doing away our own strength, by the coming in of God's strength; and our own wisdom and righteousness, by the coming in of God's wisdom and righteousness.

But now, civil ecclesiastical reformation reforms sin by the halves, as well as the man; and so only reforms outward and gross sins, such as run into the eyes of the world, which are the least by a thousand times, of the evils that a man hath and acts; but the greatest part of sin, it still leaves within as it was.

Fourthly, It is a powerful and mighty reformation: it is wrought in a man by the very power of God, even by the right hand of his righteousness. And so no sin, lust, corruption, though never so mighty, is able to resist this work of God by the gospel; but it makes the whole body of sin, and the whole kingdom of the devil, fly in pieces before it: The power of God in creating and redeeming the elect, may as well be resisted, as the power of God in reforming them: for it is a power above all power, that God puts forth in this work, and so is not to be made void by any creature. In every stroke of this work, the power of the Lord God Almighty is put forth, as every rightly reformed Christian knows. And if the love of God had not put forth this power in the soul, a Christian had never been reformed; no, not from one sin.

Now the power of this reformation eminently appears, in that it changeth the very natures of men; it finds them lions, it makes them lambs; it finds them wolves, it makes them sheep; it finds them birds of prey, it makes them doves; it finds them trees of the forest, it makes them apple-trees; in a word, it finds them flesh, it makes them spirit; it finds them sin, it makes them righteousness. Mighty indeed is the power of this reformation.

But now, as this gospel-reformation is mighty, so civil ecclesiastical reformation is weak: for as the former hath the power of God engaged in it, so this latter hath only the power of man; and so can do no such works as the former. I appeal to all that are spiritual, what heart or nature was ever changed by this sort of reformation? For, there is that corruption in the heart of every man, that is able to stand out against all the reformation that all the powers in the world can undertake. And so, the reformation managed by the mightiest and severest power of man, is weak as water in this business of changing natures; and can only change some outward forms and postures, and the like, leaving in the mean time, a man's nature the same as it was before; it only puts sheep's clothing upon men, which is easily done; but still leaves them wolves underneath.

Fifthly: It is a constant reformation; a reformation, which, being once begun, is never intermitted again, till all be perfected. For as long as God's nature dwells in ours, it will ever be reforming our nature to itself, till it be altogether like it. As long as the Spirit of God dwells in the flesh, it will still be reforming the flesh to the Spirit, till the whole body of sin be destroyed, and the natural man be made spiritual. So that the whole time of this life that is lived in faith, that is, in union with Christ, is a time of continual reformation; and a Christian is daily washing, cleansing, and purifying himself, till he purify himself, even as Christ is pure.

But now, civil ecclesiastical reformation, at first makes a great noise and tumult in the world, and afterward lies as still as a stone. For such reformation reforms states and kingdoms to men's own profit, honour, power, advantages; and so to themselves, rather than to Christ. And when men have once attained to their own ends, their activity ceases.

Again, it brings men to certain outward orders and conformities, and then runs round as in a mill, and goes no farther.

Again, it reforms for a time, and not constantly, because the outward power being taken away, nature returns to its own course again. For state ecclesiastical reformation only changes some outward works, leaving the nature the self-same that it was (as you have heard.)

Now where the works are contrary to nature, nature by degrees returns to itself again, and puts an end to those works; and so there is an end of that reformation.

And thus you see what gospel-reformation is, and how qualified; whereby you see it clearly differenced from civil ecclesiastical reformation.

And O that that prophesy might be fulfiled, *The eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.* Isai. xxxii. 3.

The second general.

To whose hand this work of reformation is committed.

Now that is only to Jesus Christ, the great and only Magistrate in the kingdom of God; and who only is to do all that is done in the church of God: He is the *Dominus fac totum* (as they say.)

If the church be to be redeemed, Christ must redeem it; if it be to be governed, Christ must govern it; if it be protected, Christ must protect it; if it be to be saved, Christ must save it: All that is to be done in the church of God, Christ only is to do it; and so among other things to reform it; that is, to wash it, sanctify it, purify it.

Christ then is the only reformer of the church of God. For,

First: God hath committed the care of the church's reformation to Christ only, and to nobody else: and this is a thousand times better for the church, than if he had

committed it to all the princes and magistrates in the world. *All things are given to me of my Father*, saith Christ; and the church above all other things: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; thine they were* by election, and *thou gavest them me*, that I might redeem them, and reform them, and present them to thee again without spot. So that the Father hath committed the care of the reformation of the church to Christ.

And secondly: Christ hath taken this care upon himself out of obedience to his Father, and love to his church.

1. Out of obedience to his Father: for he saith, *I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me: and this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose none.* And so Christ reforms all, that he might lose none, out of obedience to his Father.

2. Out of love to his church he takes this care and charge on him. For such is the love of Christ to the church, every where so graciously discovered in the gospel, that he doth not only give himself for us, to redeem us; but also gives himself to us, to reform us. Christ dying for us, is our redemption; Christ dwelling and living in us, is our reformation.

Thirdly: This work of reformation, is only suitable to, and convenient for Christ the head, as having so near and dear interest in the church his body. And so he is full of love, and bowels, and tender compassions to the church: He will not deal roughly, ruggedly, and boisterously with the saints; he will not grieve them, and vex them, and oppress them, and crush them in pieces: but he, being their head, will deal meekly and gently with them; *He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax.* When he is reforming the sins and corruptions of the faithful, he deals with them in the very love and goodness of God, and will not put them to more sorrow than

needs must; and when he must needs put them to sorrow in the flesh (for flesh cannot chuse but mourn to part with itself utterly in this reformation) yet he is present with the comforts of his Spirit; and when he hath smitten them, is ready to heal them, and to bind them up as soon as he hath broken them. He deals with every Christian in this reformation, as tenderly as a man doth with one of his own members, that is in grief and anguish; he regards and handles him as his own body, as his own flesh. And so the reformation of Christ is altogether for edication, and not at all for destruction: for it is his own body he reforms, and so doth it with the love of the head.

But when strangers, whose the church is not, set upon reforming it, what havock do they make of the church of God! how do they wound, and threaten, and punish, and destroy it! and have no regard at all to the weak, infirm, sorrowful saints, that are wrestling with many doubts, fears, agonies, corruptions, and temptations, till they are overtaken with the very shadow of death. How do they persecute them that are already smitten, and grieve them more that are already wounded!

And so you see, that he only that hath an interest in the church, as being the head of the church, is only fit to reform it; whereas the reformation of strangers, hath more cruelty in it than love, and more destruction than edification.

Fourthly: Christ is only able for this work: for the reformation of the church is as great a work as the redemption of it; and he only that could do the one can do the other. Christ must die to redeem the church, and he must live to reform it: and so as the government of the church only lies upon his shoulders who is the head; so the reformation of it only lies upon his hands, and his hands only are sufficient for it. If all the angels of heaven should un-

dertake the work of reformation, they would sink under it; how much more the powers of the world?

For, the taking away transgression for us, and from us, which is the only reformation of the New Testament, is a work agreeable to none but the Son of God: as it is written, *His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins:* Wherefore, having the reformation, and Christ for their reformer, the people shall be saved from their sins: now he must needs be the *righteousness of God*, that must save people from sin.

And he must needs be God in the flesh, that must reform the flesh; none else can do it.

To conclude this: None but the power of God, and wisdom of God, and the righteousness of God, which is Jesus Christ, can reform the church, which is the kingdom of God: and the power, wisdom, and righteousness of men have no place at all here, except they will turn the power, wisdom, and righteousness of God out of his office: for so speaks the Spirit by the prophet *Isaiah*, chap. ii. 17. *The loftiness of men shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted.* Now what is the loftiness and haughtiness of men, but the power, wisdom, and righteousness of men? and all this, saith the Lord, *shall be bowed down, and laid low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted;* that is, Christ alone, who is the power, wisdom, and righteousness of God: and that in the day of the church's reformation, as well as in the day of the church's redemption. And thus you see that Christ is the reformer of the church, his body, which is the city and kingdom of God.

And therefore the reformation of the church is certain; for Christ will as surely reform it, as he hath redeemed it; and all that the Father hath given him he hath redeemed; and all that he hath redeemed he will reform, that he may make them fit to present to God: That so all that the Son

hath received from the Father, having redeemed and reformed them, he may give them back to the Father again.

So that I doubt not of the church's reformation, because it is Christ's own work, and he hath undertaken the doing of it. And as none of the powers of the earth could help him to reform the church; so none of the powers of hell shall be able to hinder him, but as many as he hath redeemed unto God by his blood, in his due time he will reform them all by his Spirit, as belonging to his care and charge. And therefore let us look to Christ for the reformation of his church. This reformation is the work of Christ's care and love: and he being faithful in this business, I am at rest and quiet, seeing Christ is as able for the reformation of the church, as for the redemption of it.

And therefore (honourable and beloved) I say to you, touching this work of the reformation of the spiritual temple of the New Testament, as God once said to *David* touching the building of the material temple of the Old Testament, 1 *Kings* viii. 18. *Whereas it was in thine heart*, said God, *to build an house to my name, thou didst well it was in thy heart. Nevertheless, thou shalt not build the house, but thy son that shall come out of thy loins, he shall build an house unto my name.* And elsewhere he renders the reason of it, why *David* should not, and *Solomon* should build this house; because, saith he, *thou hast been a man of war, and hath shed much blood:* but *Solomon*, he shall live and flourish in peace, and he shall do it.

So say I to you touching this work of reformation. You did well, in that it was in you hearts to reform the kingdom of God, and the spiritual church, which is Christ's own dear body; nevertheless you shall not reform it, for you have been men of war, that is, you have managed a great and mighty war against great and mighty

enemies, and have shed much blood; for the Lord hath given you the necks of your enemies, and hath subdued them under you that rose up against you, and you have trod them down as mire in the streets. And therefore you shall not do this work, having been men of war; but Christ, the *prince of peace*, he shall reform the church of God: For this is not a work of men of war, but of the *prince of peace;* seeing this is not a work of human might or strength, but of the Spirit. So that you did well, that you thought to reform the church: but when you shall understand, that the reformation of the church, is as great a work as the redemption of it, you will acknowledge the work is too great for you, and that it belongs only unto Christ: seeing the Father hath committed the care of this work only to him; and he hath taken this care and charge upon himself, and it is only suitable to him, as being the head of the church: and he only is able for it, as being the Son of God, and equal to God.

The third general.

By what means Christ brings this reformation about.

And that is, by these two, and them only; to wit, the word, and the spirit.

The first means whereby Christ reforms the church, is the word.

By this Christ doth all that ever he doth in his kingdom: by this he calls and rejects; by this he binds and looseth; by this he comforts and terrifies; by this he enlightens and makes blind; by this he kills and quickens; by this he saves and damns; and all that ever he doth in this kingdom, he doth by his word, and without this he doth nothing of all that he doth. Christ doth all in his kingdom by the word only; but antichrist doth all things without the word, even by the decrees and constitutions of men.

Now as Christ doth all other things in the church by the word, so he reforms too: *Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken to you.* All the powers in the world cannot reform the church as the word of God can do; for *this is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a descerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,* and doth change and renew, and reform all.

And therefore Christ, when he comes to reform the church, comes with no worldly power or weapons, but only with the word in his mouth; yea, though God set him king upon his holy hill of Sion, yet he reforms not by outward power, but by preaching; saying, *I will publish the decree whereof the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And again, *the spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel.* And again, *the Redeemer shall come to Sion:* and then follows the covenant of God with the Redeemer, *My word shall never depart out of thy mouth,* Isai. lix. 10. and in *Psal.* xlv. the church saith by the Spirit to Christ, *Ride on prosperously in the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness,* which is the word of the gospel.

And so Christ, when the time of reformation was come, went up and down, preaching the word. And thus he brought to pass the glorious reformation of the New Testament, by preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and nothing else.

And when he was to leave the world, he sent his disciples to carry on the work of reformation, as he himself had begun it, as he saith, *As my Father sent me, so send I you;* not with the power of the world, but with the power of the word: and so he bid them *go teach all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature:* and by teaching and preaching to the world, to reform the world: and so ac-

cordingly they did, *Mark* xvi. 20. *They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them.* So that Christ sent them not forth with any power of swords, or guns, or prisons, to reform the world; or with any power of states, or armies: but sent forth poor, illiterate mechanic men, and only armed them with the power of the word; and behold what wonders they wrought by that power alone! They turned the world upside-down; they changed the manners, customs, religion, worship, lives, and natures of men; they carried all oppositions and difficulties before them; they won many in most kingdoms unto Christ, and brought them into willing subjection and obedience to him: and all this they did, I say, not with any earthly or secular power, but by the ministry of the gospel alone, Christ's great and only instrument for the conquering, subduing, and reforming of the nations. And so the power appeared to be God's only, and not the creatures.

And thus you see how the word is one of the means Christ useth for reformation.

And this word only works a right reformation: for this reforms truly and indeed; all other power reforms but in appearance. So that there is no true reformation of any thing but what is wrought by the word: but whatever evil is reformed, and not by the power of the word, it is not truly reformed; it is only reformed in the flesh, and not in the spirit: it is only suspended in the outward operation of it, but the seed and nature of it still remains in the heart, to grow up and work again, as opportunity serves. And therefore, whatever evil or corruption is reformed in thee, see it be reformed by the power of the word: if the word hath killed it in thee, it is killed indeed; if not, it is alive in thee, though it seem to be dead. The outward power of the world may set up an image of

reformation, but it is the word only can work true reformation.

And therefore let us learn to rely on the word for the reformation of the church.

For this is much for the honour of the word (which God hath magnified above all his name) when we can neglect the power of the world, and leave the whole work of reformation to the power, working, and efficacy of the word alone, which is almighty, and able to bring off the heart from all things to God. As on the contrary, it is a great dishonour to God and his word, when men dare not relie on the word alone to reform the church, though it be stronger than men and angels, and all the creatures; but will needs be calling in the power of the world, and rest and rely on that, for this work, as if the power of the word were not sufficient. But let such men know, that if the power of the word will not reform them, all the power of the world will never do it. And therefore well said *Luther*, *Prædicare annuntiare, scribere volo; neminem autem vi adigam;* "I will preach, and teach, and write; but I will constrain nobody."

O therefore that our civil and ecclesiastical powers would so much honour Christ's word, as to trust the reformation of his kingdom with it; and that as it is sufficient to reform the church, so you would be pleased to think it sufficient; and thus shall you give Christ and his word due honour, as well as declare your own faith.

And if you would commit this work to the power of the word, to which only it belongs, you shall soon see what the word would do. There is no such glorious sight under heaven, as to see the word, in the spirit and power of it, come in to an unreformed world, and to observe the changes and alterations it makes there.

And thus you see that one of the means that Christ useth for the reformation of his church, is the word.

But here I must farther declare to you, that this word by which Christ reforms the church, is not the word of the law; for the law made nothing perfect, but the word of the gospel; this, this is the only word that works reformation.

For first.

1. This word works faith; and therefore it is called the word of faith, because *faith comes by hearing of this word.* Rom. x. 8. and *ver.* 17. Now as the word works faith, so faith apprehends the word, even *that Word that was with God, and was God;* this living and eternal Word dwells in our hearts by faith, as the apostle saith, *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith:* And this Word dwelling in us by faith, changeth us into its own likeness, as fire changeth the iron into its own likeness, and takes us up into all its own virtues.

And so the word dwelling in the flesh, reforms the flesh, and it dwells in us through faith, and faith is wrought by the gospel.

So that the word whereby Christ reforms, is not the word without us, as the word of the law is; but the word within us, as it is written, *The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart;* and this is the word of faith: If thou live under the word many years, and if it come not into thy heart, it will never change thee, nor reform thee. And therefore the reforming word is the word within us, and the word within us is the word of faith.

2. The gospel reforms, because it doth not only reveal Christ's righteousness, as it is written, *The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;* but also it communicates it to us; and therefore it is called the word of righteousness, because it works righteousness. So that Christ, the *righteousness of God,* is conveyed to us through this word of righteousness. And when the righteousness of God, revealed in the gospel, comes and dwells in us,

what reformation of sin doth this work? all sin perisheth at the rebuke of his countenance; for the righteousness of God will endure no sin in us; and so the gospel reforms by working righteousness in us.

3. The gospel reforms because it shews us Christ; and by shewing us him, it changeth us into his image: the more we see Christ in the gospel, the more are we made like unto him; that as we have born *the image of the earthly*, so we may bear *the image of the heavenly* Adam.

2. Yea, the gospel shews us God in Christ in all his glory, and changeth us into that glory of God which is shown us; *we all*, saith Paul, *with open face beholding as in a glass* (and this *glass* is the gospel) *the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord:* so that the gospel, by shewing us God, changeth us into the image of God; and God, through the gospel, ariseth on us, till his glory be seen upon us.

And thus you see the grounds of the gospel reformation.

So that now the word of the gospel, is the only reforming word: and if there be never so much preaching, if it be but legal, it will reform nobody aright; because there can be no working faith, nor communicating righteousness, nor changing men into God's image, and so there can be no true reformation.

And thus much for the first means of reformation which Christ useth, which is the word, and this word, the gospel.

2. *Means, the Spirit.*

For the Spirit accompanies the word in the ministry of the gospel; and therefore the gospel is called the *ministration of the Spirit;* that is, the word and spirit in union and operation. In the law, there was the letter without the Spirit, and so that could do nothing: but in the gospel, the word and the Spirit are always joined: and therefore,

saith Christ, *The words that I speak are spirit and life*, that is, they come from the the Spirit, and carry spirit with them.

And this Spirit that is present in the word of the gospel, and works in it, and is given by it, reforms mightily: and therefore it is called the Spirit of judgment and burning; and the Lord looking to this time of reformation, promised long before, to *pour out his Spirit upon all flesh*, and so to reform all flesh.

Now the Spirit poured forth upon the flesh, reforms it two ways.

1. By taking away all evil out of the flesh.

2. By changing the flesh into its own likeness.

1. The Spirit poured forth upon the flesh, reforms it all, by taking all evil out of the flesh: As first, all sin and corruption; saith *Paul*, *If you mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit, ye shall live:* the deeds of the flesh are not to be mortified by any power, but by the Spirit; all pride and envy, and lust, and covetousness, and carnal-mindedness, and all other evils of the flesh, are reformed by the presence of the Spirit in it, and no other way.

2. The Spirit reforms, not only all sins in the church, but all errors, and heresies, and false doctrines; as is evident by that of *Paul*, 1 Cor. iii. 12. *If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, &c.*

So that a man may lay Christ for a foundation, and yet build wood, hay, and stubble upon him, that is, human doctrines and the inventions of men, and false and wicked opinions.

2. The destruction of this hay, wood, and stubble, that is, error, heresy, and human doctrines, in the church of God, that is, the people built on Christ, shall not be by

laws of states, or constitutions of councils, but by the Holy Spirit, which is as fire.

The Spirit shall come into the saints, and burn up all that corruption and false doctrine that will not endure the Spirit; and error shall never be destroyed but by the Spirit of truth. So that the Spirit reforms all error, as well as all corruptions in the faithful.

2. The Spirit doth not only reform the flesh by taking away all evil out of it, whether corruptions or errors; but also it changeth the flesh into its own likeness: For the Spirit is as fire, that changeth every thing into itself: and so doth the Spirit in the flesh, make the flesh spiritual: like heavenly fire, it changeth men into its own likeness, and makes them spiritual, heavenly, holy, meek, good, loving, &c.

And thus the Spirit reforms indeed: When the Spirit is poured forth upon a man, how wonderfully doth it reform him! this works a change in him in good earnest: and no man is ever truly reformed till he receives the Spirit.

And thus you see the means that Christ useth to work this reformation, and these are the only means.

Object. Yea, but I hope you will allow secular power too: May not the spiritual church of Christ be reformed with wordly and secular power?

Ans. I answer, by no means; and that for these causes.

1. Forceable reformation is unbeseeming the gospel: for the gospel is the gospel of peace, and not of force and fury. Civil ecclesiastical reformation reforms by breathing out threatenings, punishments, prisons, fire, and death; but the gospel by preaching peace (*k*). And therefore it is most unbeseeming the gospel to do any thing

(*k*) Though the truth carries its evidence in itself, and the word of God is greater than all the testimonies of men, yet for their sakes that are weak, I have inserted the judgments of some godly men (as I

rashly and violently, for the advancement thereof: for the gospel of peace is not to be advanced by violence; and therefore violent reformers live in contradiction to the gospel of peace, and cannot be truly reckoned Christians, but enemies to Christianity; since Christianity doth all by the power of the anointing, but antichristianity doth all by the power of the world.

2. Forceable reformation is unsuitable to Christ's kingdom; for Christ's kingdom stands in the Spirit; and the force of flesh and blood can contribute nothing to this.

2. Again; the faithful, the subjects of this kingdom, are a spiritual people, and so they are without the reach of any outward force; you may as well go about to bring the

have accidentally met with them) who have spoken of these things in the spirit; that so you may see the truth, though it hath but few followers, yet it hath some. *Melancton* on *Psal.* cx. 3. —— habebis populum, non coactum gladio, sed verbo collectum, & læto corde amplectentem evangelium, & te sponte celebrantem. Discernit igitur ecclesiam ab imperiis mundanis, & externam servitutem a cultibus cordis, accensis voce evangelii & a spiritu sancto. —— Ag. Religio cogi non vult, doceri expetit. Immanitate non stabilitur, sed evertitur. *Polan.* This *Charles*, to whom *Leo* gave the title of the most Christian king, was a great conqueror, and overcame many nations with the sword: and as the Turk compelleth to his faith, so he compelleth with violence to the faith of Christ; but alas, the true faith of Christ whereunto the Holy Ghost draws men's hearts, through preaching the word of truth, he knew not. &c. *Tindal.* Fides, sua sponte, non coacte agere vult. *Luth.* Christus non voluit vi & igne cogere homines ad fidem. *Luth.* Hæreticos comburere, est contra volantatem spiritus. *Luth.* He hath given in the church the sword of the Spirit to inforce with, and not the sword of the magistrate. Prorsus diversa ratio est regni Christi & mundi. Mundani magistratus quæ volunt imperant, & subditi coguntur obedientiam præstare. At in Regno Christi, quod non est mundana aut pontificia dominatio, sed spirituale regnum, nihil simile geritur, sed quivis alterius judex, & quilibet alteri subjectus est. At tyranni & animicidæ illi, nihil morantes vocem Christi, regnum meum non est de hoc mundo, ex ecclesia, politiam civilem, seu potius pontificium imperium constituerunt. *Luth.*——Quare ipsam sedem

angels of heaven under an outward and secular power, as the faithful, who, being born of the Spirit, are more spiritual than they. And what hath flesh and blood to do with them that are born of the Spirit, in the things of the Spirit? And therefore touching this kingdom which is spiritual, and beyond not only the power but the cognizance of the world, God hath said, *There shall be none to kill nor to hurt in my holy mountain.* Isai. xi. 9. And again; *Violence shall no more be heard in thy streets, wasting nor destruction within thy borders.* Isai. lx. 18.

3. As they are a spiritual people, so also a willing people; and what needs outward power to force a people made willing by the spirit? *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. cx. 3. The very day of Christ's

bestiæ nego, nihil moratus sit ne bonus vel malus, qui in ea sedet. Sedes inquam quæ sit super omnes sedes, nulla est in ecclesia super terram jure divino, sed omnes sunt æquales quia una fides, unum baptisma, unus Christus, &c. *Luth.*

Where there is no worldly superiority over one another, there is no worldly compulsion of one another. In the natural body, there is no convocation of many members to govern one, or of more members to govern fewer; but the foot performs its office without being under the authoritative power of the hands; yea, each member performs its office aright, without being in subordinatien to another, by the guidance of that head to which it is united, and of that spirit that dwells in it; each member having an immediate influence of the head upon itself, though it may outwardly seem to be further from the head than another member. And thus it is in believers and congregations. Quid autem vi & coactione opus vobis est, qui hujusmodi certamen decertatus, in quo cogi nemo debet? *Ulrichus ab Hutten*, to the council of priests.

What need you the power of the magistrate to defend the truth, who have so many scriptures to defend it? the truth of God being to be defended by the word of God, and not by the power of men. *Idem.* I could produce many more testimonies; but these are sufficient to shew, that I am not alone in this point, against forceable reformation; but have the armory of *David* to defend it withal, on which there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

power is not to force men against their wills, but to make them willing. The Spirit of God that brings them to this kingdom, makes them willing to obey God there, and gives them pleasure in that obedience, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts. They that are not a willing people, belong not to Christ's kingdom, but to the world.

3. By this forceable reformation, human institution is set up; for the power of the world reforms by the prudence of the world; and men never use human power in the church, but they first make human laws in it; and human laws are the rule of human power. And so, by this means the authority of men is made to have power, not in the things of men, but in the things of God; which is the great dishonour of God, and his authority.

4. It brings men into blind obedience, and makes them obey what is commanded on pain of punishment, though they know not whether it be right or wrong, with the word, or against the word: So that a man shall say, that which I do I am constrained to do, and therefore I do it because I am constrained.

I read in *Frith's answer to the bishop of Rochester*, that a youth being present at his father's burning, the officers seeing him, resolved to examine him also, to try if they might find him a sectary or an heretic: but the youth dismayed at the sad sight of his father's death, and fearing the like end himself, being asked of one of them, how he believed? Answered, sir, I believe even as it pleaseth you. And so, the more outward and violent power is used upon men, the more of this kind of faith and obedience you shall have: When men shall see prisons, and banishments, and loss of goods, and death, walking up and down the kingdom for the reformation of the church, you shall at last have men say, sirs, we will believe and do, even as it pleaseth you: We will believe as the state pleaseth, or

we will believe as the council pleaseth; and let them make what confession they will, we had rather believe them, than endure them.

And thus by fear and punishment, many men are brought to say and do that which they neither believe nor understand: and how acceptable such popish faith and obedience is unto God, all spiritual Christians know, and every man's conscience, methinks, should be convinced.

5. It makes men hypocrites and not saints; for it forceth the body, and leaves the heart as it was; for the heart cannot be forced by outward power, but by the inward efficacy of the truth: Now the hearts of men being corrupt, what are all outward duties they are forced to, but so much hypocrisy? So that forceable reformation makes only hypocrites and gilded sepulchres, putting a form of godliness upon the outward man, when there is no power of godliness in the inner man, but a power of ungodliness.

That reformation, with which the uncleanness of the heart stands, is none of Christ's reformation.

What is the reformation of the outward man, when the heart is full of atheism, ignorance of God, adultery, pride, murder, &c. and all the corruptions of nature? Call you this a reformation of the church of Christ? This reformation makes none saints, but all hypocrites, forcing men's actions contrary to their natures.

6. It causes disturbances and tumults in the world; when men are forced by outward power to act against their inward principles, in the things of God, what disturbances and tumults this hath bred in states and kingdoms, who knows not? So that they that lay hold on the power of men, and go about to reform hearts and consciences by outward violence, are never the cause of reformation, but always of tumult: And this renders the

cause of the gospel grievous and odious to the world, rather than commends it. And therefore, let all that love the gospel of Christ, abstain from outward violence; for they that use the sword in this kind, shall in the end perish by the sword.

A man, when he sins not against the state, may justly stand for his state freedom; and to deprive a man of his state liberties for the kingdom of Christ's sake, as it causeth disturbances in the world, so let any man shew me any such thing in the gospel.

7. Christ useth no such outward force himself, for he is meek and lowly in spirit; and not boisterous and furious in the flesh. And it was foretold of him, that he should not *strive, nor cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets*, to call in outward and secular aid, and power. He never used the power of the world, but did all by the power of the word; even his very punishments and destructions he executes by the word; *He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked:* And antichrist himself, his greatest enemy, he destroys *by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming.*

2. Neither did Christ command his apostles to use any such outward power, but he sent his disciples to preach, and bid them say, into what house soever they entered, *peace be to this house*; and if men would not receive peace, and the doctrine of peace, not to force them, but to *depart thence*, and to *shake off the dust of their feet, as a witness against them*, that they had been there, according to the will of Christ and the Father, and offered them mercy and salvation, which they refused. And this is all that the ministers of the gospel can do to any that refuse their doctrine; and not to go presently to the secular magistrate to ask power to punish them, or imprison them, or sell their goods, as is now practised in some parts of the king-

dom,e ven upon the saints: and if men be wicked, is it not misery enough for them to refuse eternal life, except also they inflict on them temporal death? Is it not misery enough for men to refuse the good things of heaven, except they also deprive them of the good things of this present life? and yet, as *Luther* said of the clergy, *Quando non invocat brachium seculare, & morte utraque terret mundum?* When doth it not call upon the secular power, and terrify the world with both deaths? Surely, Christ and the word approve not these ways. For, *Matt.* xvii. Christ imposeth no other punishment on them that would not hear the church, than that *he should be reckoned as a heathen;* and *Paul*, Titus iii. teacheth us, *after once and twice admonition, to avoid an heretic*, but not to imprison him, or kill him, or banish him: and again, *they that do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God;* and again, *he that believeth not, shall be damned;* but not one word of outward or corporal punishment in all the gospel.

3. Yea, Christ reproveth his disciples for discovering such a spirit of tyranny, as to punish men for not receiving him, *Luke* ix. when the apostles, of a prelatical and antichristian spirit in that particular, desired fire to come down from heaven upon them that would not receive him, Christ did severely rebuke them, saying, *Ye know not of what spirit ye are;* not of Christ's Spirit, which is meek, but of Satan's, *who was a murderer from the beginning*, and of antichrist's, his first begotten in the world: and he adds, *the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them;* and therefore to go about to turn the gospel, not to save men's lives, but to destroy them, and so to change Christ himself, from a Saviour into a destroyer; this is antichrist triumphant.

All these things shew that worldly power hath no place at all in the reformation of the gospel.

Now I should have proceeded here to answer some objections, as namely:

Objection 1. That of *Luke* xiv. *compel them to come in:* this, I forgetting, named not.

Object. 2. May a Christian then live as he list?

Answ. No, by no means; for he hath the word and Spirit in him, to keep him from living as he list; and he knows that no man in God's kingdom may live as he wills, but as God wills.

Object. 3. But would you have no law?

Answ. No laws in God's kingdom, but God's laws; and these are a thousand times better than all the laws of men: and they are these three:

The law of a new nature.

The *law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ.*

The law of love.

Object. 4. But would you have no government?

Answ. Yes, but the government of Christ the head, and the Holy Ghost the Spirit, in and over the church the body. They that would govern the faithful, the members of Christ's own body, make themselves the head of those members; and so antichrist may as well be found in a combination of men, as in one single person.

Object. 5. But would you have no order?

Answ. Yes, the best that is; even such an order as is in the body of Christ; where every member is placed by Christ, and none by itself; the order of the spiritual church, is a spiritual order, and not a carnal.

Object. 6. But would you have sin suffered?

Answ. No, but more truly and thoroughly destroyed than any power of the world can destroy it; even by *the Spirit of judgment and burning.*

Object. 7. But would you have sinners suffered?

Answ. No, but punished more severely than any powers of the world can punish them: For *he shall smite the earth*

with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

And as for those that are outwardly wicked, the magistrate is to keep them in order for the quiet of the state; he having power over their persons, estates, and lives.

I should also have proceeded to the next thing, the advantages of such a gospel-reformation where it is wrought; together with the uses: but because I would not be overlong, I pass by these things, and so proceed no farther in this discourse.

But now, being brought hither by an unexpected providence, I shall crave liberty to speak a few words to you, in the behalf of two kingdoms, that is, this kingdom, and God's.

1. That which I have to request of you for this kingdom, is, that you would *regard the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy:* Never was there more injustice and oppression in the nation than now; I have seen many oppressed and crushed, and none to help them. I beseech you consider this with all your hearts; for many who derive power from you, are great oppressors. And therefore I require you in the name of God, to discharge the trust that God hath put into your hands; and so *to defend the poor and fatherless, to do justice to the afflicted and needy, to deliver the poor and needy, and to rid them out of the hands of the wicked:* This is your business, discharge your duty: if you will not, then hear what the Lord saith, *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord,* Psal. xii. 5, and God's rising in this case, would prove your ruin. If you will not do God's work in the kingdom, which he hath called you to, he will do it himself without you; as it is written, *He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper,* Psal. lxxii. 12. he shall save their souls from deceit

and violence; the common evils of the times. And this is all that I have to say for this kingdom.

2. I have a few more things to say touching God's kingdom; and the first is this:

1. That as Christ's kingdom, and the kingdoms of the world are distinct, so you would be pleased to keep them so; and not mingle them together yourselves, nor suffer others to do it, to the great prejudice and disturbance of both.

2. That you would be pleased to think that Christ's kingdom (which is not of this world) hath sufficient power in itself to manage all the affairs of it, without standing in need of any aid or help from the world; seeing the power of man is of no place or use in the kingdom of God, which is not a temporal, or an ecclesiastical dominion, but a spiritual.

3. That you would suffer the little stone of Christ's kingdom, to be hewn out of the mountain of the Roman monarchy, whereof this kingdom is a part, without hands, even by the power and efficacy of the word and Spirit; seeing the hands of men cannot help, but hinder this work, which is to be done without hands: And that your might and your power would please to let God do this work of his, without might and without power, and by his Spirit only.

4. That you would be pleased to suffer the assemblings of the saints, both publicly and privately, as occasion serves, seeing this can be no prejudice to the state, but a great advantage; in as much as they meet peaceably, and make no tumults, and in their assembling pray for the peace and welfare of this divided and distracted kingdom. And also, that you take heed of scattering those churches, that meet in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ, (which are Christ's own gatherings together) lest Christ

so scatter you abroad, that you never be gathered together again.

5. That you take heed you do nothing to the prejudice of the faithful, God's own people; as he hath warned you by the Spirit, saying, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.* This place hath been miserably mistaken: for the kings of the earth and the clergy have shared it between themselves, whereas indeed it belongs to neither; for God's anointed are the faithful, that are anointed with the Spirit, the oil of God, and so are anointed as Christ was anointed. And these anointed ones are the Lord's prophets, and the Lord hath no prophets, but such as are anointed with the Spirit. Thus Christ was made the Lord's prophet, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel;* and thus are all his brethren made prophets; being fellows with him in his unction. And therefore take heed how you meddle with the Lord's anointed ones, and with the Lord's prophets; for as it is said, *He suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, he even reproved kings for their sakes,* saying, *Touch not, &c.* So the Lord hath still the same care of the same people, and will suffer no man to do them wrong, but will reprove kings and parliaments, and kingdoms, and cities, and counties, and committees, he will reprove them all for their sakes, and say, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm:* for they that are anointed with the Spirit, are the flesh of Christ, and the prophets of God, and therefore touch them and harm them at your own peril. It grieves me to see the rest of the kingdom, touching these anointed ones of God, and doing harm to these his prophets, abusing, and spoiling, and imprisoning them; it would grieve me much more if I should see you doing the same: for this would bring you as well as the kingdom under God's own reproof; and the reproof of God, who can endure?

Sixthly and lastly: Take heed you do not hinder the free passage of the gospel. When God hath put his Spirit into the hearts of men, take heed how you resist the word in those men's mouths; for the word of God, in the meanest instrument, can never be resisted, but will carry all before it; the honour, power, dignity, authority, nobility, and magistracy of the kingdom, if they should once stand up to hinder the word of God, the word of God would carry them all before it.

And therefore it grieves me to see how the city, country, counties, towns, and villages, do all rise up for the most part against the ministration of the Spirit; for this is a certain sign of the undoing of them all: God will suffer and endure any sin long, but only the contempt and opposition of the gospel: but when men once rise up against the gospel, in the spirit and power of it, they are sure to be undone by it, and to be shattered all in pieces; for this brings swift vengeance.

And therefore, when I see the generality of the people of all sorts, rise up against the ministration of the Spirit (which God hath now in these days of ours, set up, even in every county, for salvation to his people, but for a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, to the rest) I am then exceedingly distressed, and pained at the very heart, for thee, O *England*, and for all thy cities, and towns, and inhabitants; for thou that dashest against the Spirit in the gospel, how shalt thou be dashed in pieces thyself, and there shall be no healing for thee!

I could hope for peace again, and good days, suddenly in this kingdom, but for this sin of the contempt and opposing the gospel; and this makes my hopes even at an end; and the day of my fear is come forth upon me.

But, O you honourable and beloved Christians, let not your souls enter into those men's secrets, neither yet walk in their open and public ways; for ruin and destruction

are in their paths, and the way of peace they shall never know, seeing God is about to enter into controversy with all flesh, for their rising up against the ministration of the Spirit. And therefore be wise here, I beseech you, that in the shattering of the nation (if there be no remedy) you may be kept together as a blessed remnant, and a hopeful seed of the following generation.

To conclude: honourable and worthy, we will be willingly contented to do and suffer all things with you; we will cheerfully run through honour and dishonour with you; fame and infamy, gain and loss, trouble and quietness, war and peace, life and death; and do desire to reserve nothing to ourselves, *Nisi unicum verbum domini*, but only the word of God, in its own purity and liberty, to preach it, and to publish it, and to profess it, and to practise it, for the glory of God, and his *only begotten Son*, and for the good of his kingdom, and this kingdom.

And thus much unto you from the Lord.

THE

WAY OF TRUE PEACE AND UNITY,

IN THE

TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

IN ALL HUMILITY, AND BOWELS OF LOVE, PRESENTED TO THEM.

BY WILLIAM DELL,

One of the least, and most unworthy of the Servants of God, in the Gospel of his dear Son.

PSALM CXX. 7.

I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.

Utrum nos schismatici sumus an vos, nec ego nec tu, sed Christus interrogetur ut indicet ecclesiam suam, *August. contr. liter. Petil. l.* 2, *c.* 85.

TO THE HONOURABLE,

THE COMMONS OF ENGLAND,

ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

AS you are busy about the peace of the kingdom, to settle and establish that upon a right and sure foundation: so God hath engaged my heart to meditate the peace of the church. And though I have excluded your power from having a hand in this work, yet I have not in any measure wronged you, as you shall perceive, but rather endeavoured to preserve you from dashing yourselves against that rock, against which, all the ignorant and unwise rulers and kingdoms of the world, both have, and yet shall, dash themselves in pieces. It shall be your wisdom to be built up, together with the church, on Christ; but it would be your confusion, to go about to build the church on yourselves and your power; seeing this building is too weighty for any foundation, but Christ himself. Your power will do well in the kingdoms of the world, but not in God's kingdom, which is Christ's inheritance, from the beginning to the end. You shall be happy to be subject in it, but none must be lord or law-giver here but Christ himself. Let not the devil, who, in these last times, hath, in many places, translated the mystery of iniquity, from the ecclesiastical kingdom of the clergy, into the temporal kingdom of the magistrate, any longer keep it there: seeing it will be as pernicious in this, as in that: for it will be no less dangerous an evil, for the magistrate to make himself lord and law-giver in the church, than for the *Pope*, or general council, in all the kingdoms called Christian; as for the archbishop or national assembly in particular kingdoms. Men have commonly thought, that to preserve the godly in worldly peace and prosperity, is to preserve the church; whereas, to preserve them in faith, hope, love, in union

and communion with Christ and the Father, in and through the Spirit, this only is to preserve the church; and this often times, is better done by Christ, whose work only it is, in affliction, than in prosperity. Wherefore, do you look to the care of the state, and trust Christ with the care of his church, seeing he is both faithful and able to save it perfectly. The peace of the church lies in Christ only, and no part of it out of him, no not for a moment; and this their peace, Christ is able to preserve in himself, in the midst of the most cruel and desperate evils of the world. Now what the true church of Christ is, and wherein its peace and unity lies, is here, in some measure declared, for the good of the faithful every where: and particularly for your good; lest you, being glorious instruments in the hand of God for one work, should miscarry in another. And this I have done, through God, not because I was worthy to do it, but because it was worthy to be done. For why should the church any longer be ignorant of *the things that belong unto its peace?* and why should the members of it any longer lie as scattered bones, dry and dead, and not gathered up into the unity of a living body? and who could longer endure, to see unskilful physicians, under pretence of healing the church, wound it still deeper; and under pretence of procuring its peace, hurry it into endless dissensions and divisions. In this case of necessity, I could not but speak, both out of duty and love; and I hope none of you will despise to hear, who consider, that God, when he lays aside the wise and prudent, chooses babes and sucklings *to perfect his praise out of their mouths;* that so he himself may be the more glorified and admired in his weak and mean instruments. Now let his praise be above the earth and the heavens; and let him give you the honour that all his saints have: and this is his hearty desire, who humbly writes himself,

Your servant in the gospel,

WILLIAM DELL.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX,

AND THE HONOURABLE

LIEUTENANT GENERAL CROMWELL, TOGETHER WITH THE COUNCIL OF WAR.

I THOUGHT good, while you are busy about the peace of the kingdom, which is a peace without you, to put you in mind of the true peace of the true church, which is a peace within you, and an eternal peace, as the former is but a temporal; for what advantage will it be for you, to have peace among men, and to want peace with God? to do the work of God in the world, and to be destitute of the work of God in your own hearts? to destroy the enemies to worldly peace, and yet to maintain, in your own hearts, the corruptions of unrenewed nature, which are the enemies of heavenly peace? Take heed therefore, that your present employments do not so over-engage you in this world, that you neglect the world to come: take heed, lest by seeking yourselves, you have your reward here: but do the work of God, for God; and whilst you act for God, live in him, and let him be your reward, and not the creature.

And now here, in this discourse, shall you see a better peace and agreement than you are striving for, (though your work also be excellent and glorious;) even such a peace and agreement, of which Christ himself is the immediate author and prince, and which he communicates, not to the world, but to them he chooses out of the world, even the *peace of God in Jesus Christ*, by the Spirit, which hath its foundation in Christ; and its influence into each communion of saints, all the world over: And this peace

can no more he brought about by your sword, than by the magistrate's sceptre; and therefore take heed, lest you now, having power in your hands to another purpose, should so far forget yourselves, as to do that yourselves, which you have condemned in others. Therefore suffer the word only, to be both sceptre and sword in the kingdom of God, and let the true church remain free, in the freedom which Christ hath conferred upon it; or else, the Lord, whose own the church is, will as certainly, in his due time, take the sword out of your hands, as he hath done the sceptre out of the magistrate's, and throw you into one destruction with him. But I am persuaded better things of you, though I speak thus, and even such things as are suitable to the light of the gospel, and to the virtues and graces of Christ and his Spirit, which have been hitherto (and I hope, will yet still be) very manifest in you, who have the chief conduct. And upon such a gathering together of God's people and saints, (let the world, if it please, still laugh at that word) who can but think, he hath some choice and singular work in hand for his own glory? The Lord God Almighty hath already done great and wonderful works by you, and is yet doing greater, if you will continue to believe and obey; and all in these things he only is to be exalted, and not you. For hath not that day of the Lord of hosts dawned? *Yea, the morning of it is already gone forth, which is upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he is to be brought low, and the Lord alone is and must be exalted in this day.*

Now the Lord cause you to dwell and continue in that church, which is the body of Christ, and habitation of God, and give you peace with those that are reconciled to God by Christ, and to one another in Christ, by the Spirit; in which union and communion, I remain,

Your assured servant,

WILLIAM DELL.

TO THE READER.

SUCH are the noises of waters, and thunderings, and earthquakes among us; and so great and continued are our shakings and confusions, through hatred and love, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, triumphs and indignations, that there is no silence in heaven, for so much as half an hour. Wherefore, though I discourse here, touching so sweet and glorious a thing as peace, and do declare from the very word (or else I had said nothing) wherein the true peace of the true church consists; and also, how the faithful, and churches, may preserve that peace in their communion with one another, which they have in the Son, and in the Father: yet men's heads and hearts are now so full, that it is to be doubted but few will regard it. Notwithstanding, considering that there is among us, who both know, and will hear his voice at any time; I thought good to speak this in their behalf. And though I am very conscious of my rudeness of speech in this discourse, as also of my weakness and infirmity in many things, *having not yet attained to a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, 2 Cor. xi. 6. and so dare not say, that every jot and tittle here, is of the pure river of the water of life, without any human mixture; yet they that are spiritual, and able to judge, will own all in it that is of the word and spirit of truth, and will not reject silver tried four or five times, because it is not tried seven times. And what is weak and imperfect in it, the true church of Christ, (for whose dear sake and love I have spoken all this) seeing it is, as *Luther* speaks, "The queen of mercy, whose very bowels, are mere compassions and forgivenesses of sins," will easily pass it by, and forgive it. And as for men, haughty and high in their own spirit, contemning and disdaining any thing that agrees not to

their palate; I do as easily despise their censure, as they lightly pass it. It is enough that I seek the glory of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, and the welfare of that church, that is his body; and for the rest, let me become as vile as the apostles were made to the world, who were counted the filth and offscouring of all things; well knowing, that the more any thing is of Christ, the more enmity and opposition it will meet with from the world, and from the worldly church; I commit Christ's own word and cause to his own care and protection, who lives and reigns for this very purpose, to uphold his own despised truth, against the glorious, but deceitful doctrines of men; and to make all his enemies his foot-stool. And so, waiting in this assured hope, if thou love Christ, I remain

Thine in him,

WILLIAM DELL.

THE

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IN THE TRUE

CHURCH OF CHRIST.

HAVING now for a long time together, observed with a sad heart, and troubled spirit, the grievous differences and dissensions among the faithful, and churches of Christ: and perceiving also, that there is yet no healing of this error, many or most of them not clearly understanding wherein their true peace and unity ought to consist; and so, are still prosecuting former with latter mistakes, till their wound is become almost incurable; I found my heart inclined and engaged by God, to propound to others that way of peace, which myself have learned from the word. And this I desire to do, not that I might seem to be something, or be accounted of, any more than the meanest of all God's people, being indeed unworthy to minister so much as a cup of cold water to the church, the spouse of Christ, much less so incomparable a treasure as the word of God is, in comparison of which, all the world is not to be mentioned; but merely out of love and compassion to the infirmities of my brethren, whom I see walking in the light of their own fire, and in the sparks which they themselves do kindle, whereby they are in great danger to *lie down in sorrow;* whilst in the mean time they neglect the true light, which alone is to shine in the kingdom of God, till all ignorance and darkness be done away. And as my end and design is to bring all men from all human doctrines and conceptions

of carnal wisdom and prudence, to the word of God: so I desire all men that are spiritual, and able to judge, to allow of no more in this discourse, than they shall find agreeable to this word; and whatever the word of God, in the true sense and meaning of it, shall disapprove or condemn; so far, let them also disapprove and condemn with it, as I myself also do: knowing well, that no word ought to have any place in the church of God, but the word of God, which alone carries light, life, righteousness, wisdom and power, sufficient, and enough in itself, to do the whole mind and work of God in his church. Wherefore, what I have freely learned, I shall freely communicate, desiring every one to regard his own salvation; seeing now, after so clear a discovery of truth, he can have no cloak, nor the least excuse for his sin.

Now, that he that reads may understand, it is necessary for me, speaking of the unity and peace of the church, to tell you at first, that I intend not to propound any way of peace, either between the church and the world, or else between the carnal and spiritual children of the church, as having learned no such thing out of the word of God.

First: Not between the church and the world: for the Lord never intended any reconciliation and agreement between these, in the spiritual and eternal things of the kingdom of God; for these are two distinct seeds, and sorts of people; the one from beneath, the other from above; the one the seed of the woman; the other the seed of the serpent; and between these two, God hath put such an enmity, that no man can take away. Wherefore, they who never minded these two different seeds, between whom God hath put such irreconcileable enmity, would make all the people of one or more whole kingdoms a church at once, and would reconcile all of them together, in the things of God, and in the ways of his worship, according to devices and methods of their own; these men

know not what they do; for they walk in the darkness of their own hearts, and not in the light of the word; which shews us clearly, that it is as possible to reconcile *Michael* and the *Devil*, as the angels of both.

2. Neither, secondly, do I find any way in the word to reconcile all those together, who are commonly called the visible church: seeing, even among these, there are two distinct sorts of children, as *Paul* teacheth us; one sort are those who are born after the flesh, as *Ishmael* and *Esau;* and another are those who are *born after the Spirit*, as *Isaac* and *Jacob:* and there is as great enmity between these in the church, as between the former in the world; for *they that are born after the flesh*, are always persecuting them *that are born after the Spirit;* but never agreeing with them.

Now of these two sorts of Christians, one makes up the body of Christ; the other, the body of antichrist. The spiritual children make up Christ's true body, as it is written, *He gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body;* for these, being born of the Spirit, do also partake of the Spirit, and so are the true flesh of Christ, as all that flesh is, in which the Spirit dwells: and these all *worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh*, that is, in no fleshly forms, ceremonies, or worship.

The carnal children of the church, make up antichrist's true body: For as Christ's body consists of spiritual Christians, so antichrist's of carnal; for antichrist sets up in the temple of God, as well as Christ: and as Christ gets his body together of spiritual Christians, so antichrist gets his body together of carnal Christians: and these have a form of religion, or godliness, but they have no spirit or power in that form: yea, under the form of godliness, they exercise the greater power of ungodliness: And Christ and his Spirit, and all their things, are no where more op-

posed, than by those in the church, who have the letter of the word, but want the spirit of it, being taught of men only, and not of God. So that, all that part of Christianity, that is destitute of the Spirit, and hath the name only, and not the anointing of Christians, makes up the body of antichrist. And now there can be no more agreement between these two bodies, of Christ and of antichrist, that is, between spiritual and carnal Christians, than between Christ and antichrist themselves, the heads of these bodies. And as I find nothing in the word, so neither do I propound any thing for an agreement here: For to go about to reconcile there, where the Father never intended, nor the Son never undertook any reconciliation, would not be a work of wisdom, but of weakness.

So then, the way of peace I shall speak of, is between the children of peace, touching whom God hath promised, that *He will give them one heart, and one way;* and for whom Christ hath prayed, *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:* And these are the elect, made faithful, called to be saints, and sanctified through their calling; and these are the true church of God.

The peace then I seek by this discourse, is the peace of the true church: Wherefore, I shall first declare the church itself, whose peace I seek; and then declare wherein this church's true peace and unity lies; and also how it may be preserved among themselves, it being first wrought by Jesus Christ.

For the church itself; what I have learned touching it, I shall speak plainly, and something largely, because the right understanding hereof is so absolutely necessary to our present business: and yet there are very many, and very great mistakes and misapprehensions, touching it, even among the faithful.

The right church then, is not the whole multitude of the people, whether good or bad, that join together in an outward form, or way of worship; for in this church, there are whoremongers, idolaters, thieves, murderers, and all sorts of wicked and unbelieving persons; which are so far from being the church of Christ, that they are the very synagogue of Satan, and children of the devil; and therefore I shall not speak of this church. But the church I shall speak of, is the true church of the New Testament, which, I say, is not any outward or visible society, gathered together into the consent or use of outward things, forms, ceremonies, worship, as the churches of men are; neither is it known by seeing or feeling, or the help of any outward sense, as the society of mercers, or drapers, or the like; but it is a spiritual and invisible fellowship, gathered together in the unity of faith, hope, and love, and so into the unity of the Son, and of the Father by the Spirit; wherefore it is wholly hid from carnal eyes, neither hath the world any knowledge or judgment of it.

This true church is the communion of saints, which is the communion believers have with one another: not in the things of the world, or in the things of men, but in the things of God; for as believers have their union in the Son, and in the Father, so in them also they have their communion; and the communion they have with one another in God, cannot be in their own things, but in God's things, even in his light, life, righteousness, wisdom, truth, love, power, peace, joy, &c. This is the true communion of saints, and this communion of saints is the true church of God.

Now this true church of God, differs from the churches of men in very many particulars, as follow.

1. Members come unto the churches of men, either of their own minds, or else by the persuasion, or by the

forcing of others; and so only after the will of man; but none come to this true church, but from the drawing of God the Father, and his own calling, according to his own purpose.

2. In the churches of men, members are admitted through an outward confession of doctrine; but none are admitted into this true church, but through a new birth, from God and his Spirit: *John* iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, (which is the right church of the New Testament) *for that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, and so remains without in the world; but *that which is born of the spirit, is spirit*, and so hath entrance into the true church.

3. In the churches of men, there are more wicked than righteous; but in this true church of Christ, the people are all righteous, not one excepted; as it is written, *Thy people shall be all righteous.* Isaiah lx. For they all have their iniquities forgiven them, and they are all redeemed and washed with the *blood of the Lamb.*

4. In the churches of men, the people, for the most part, are only taught of men, who are their heads, and leaders, and whose judgments they depend on, and follow in all things; but in the right church, the people are all *taught of God*, as *Isaiah* saith, *Thy children shall be all taught of the Lord:* and Christ saith, *They shall hear and learn from the Father:* and *John* saith, *The anointing they have received, teacheth them all things.*

5. In the churches of men, the greatest part are hated and rejected of God, as being strangers and enemies to Christ; but in the true church, all the members are dear to God, as Christ is dear; and loved of God, as Christ is loved, as being one flesh and spirit with him.

6. The churches of men are of men's building, contriving, framing, fashioning, beautifying: but the true church is built only by Christ; as it is written, *The man*

whose name is the BRANCH, *he shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build it.* Zach. vi. 12. And again, *Upon this rock I will build my church*, Matt. xvi. 18. The true Church is such a building, which neither men nor angels can frame, but Christ alone.

7. The churches of men are, all of them, more or less, the habitation of antichrist; who, as *Paul* saith, 2 *Thess.* ii 4. *as God, sitteth in the temple of God*, that is, not in the true temple of God, but in the churches of men, which arrogate to themselves that name and title; *shewing himself that he is God:* For antichrist always dwells there, where men have a form of godliness, denying the power: but the true church is built together, to be the *habitation of God in the Spirit*, Ephes. ii. 22. And again, *Ye are the temples of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*

8. The churches of men are as large as men will make them; for they that have chief power in these churches, interesting themselves in wordly magistrates, through their favour and help, make their churches as large as the magistrate's dominions: thus the church of *Rome*, was made of as large extent as the dominions of the *emperor*, and of other princes, in whom the *Pope* had interest. And so likewise, the church in other kingdoms, was made as large as the dominions of the temporal magistrate; and all under their power must be forced to be of their church. But the true church, which is the kingdom of the Son, is only the preparation of the Father's kingdom, and so will admit no more into it, than the Father's kingdom will admit into it; the Son's kingdom, and the Father's, being of a like latitude and extent; and so the Son's kingdom is no larger than the Father's, nor the Father's than the Son's: The Father's kingdom will not receive any into it, that have not first been of the Son's kingdom; and the Son's kingdom will not admit into it, which the Father's

kingdom will not afterwards receive; but the Son delivers up his whole kingdom to the Father, and the Father receives it all, without any exception.

Now from hence these three things are evident.

1. That the kingdoms of *England*, *Scotland*, &c. are not the church, but the world, as well as the kingdoms of *France*, *Spain*, *Hungary*, &c. but in all these, and all other kingdoms, the faithful, who are taken into union and communion with Christ, and with one another in him, they are the church, and not the kingdoms themselves.
2. In particular assemblies, whether parochial or congregational, all the company that meet together bodily, and have outward communion in outward ordinances, are not the church; but those among all these, that meet together in one faith and spirit, in one Christ and God; for herein only stands the true communion of saints, and the true church of the New Testament is to be judged hereby, and by no outward things whatsoever.
3. That it belongs not to magistrates and worldly powers, to say which is the church, and which is not the church; who do belong to it, and who do not; but it belongs to Christ only to point out his own church, seeing he only knows it, and it only stands by his election and collection, and not by man's.

9. The churches of men knit themselves together into such societies, by some outward covenant or agreement among themselves: But the true church is knit into their society among themselves, by being first knit unto Christ, their head; and as soon as ever they are one with him, they are also one with one another in him; and are not first one among themselves, and then one with Christ: So that the true church is a spiritual society, knit unto Christ by faith, and knit to one another in Christ, by the

Spirit, and love; and this makes them infinitely more one, than any outward covenant they can engage themselves in: the union wherein God makes us one, passing all the unions wherein we can make ourselves one. And so, when some believers perceive the grace that is given to others, they presently fall into one communion, without any more ado. Wherefore, they that are of the church, the body, cannot deny communion to them that are in true union with Christ, the head, when they do perceive this grace. For this is considerable in this matter, that we are not first one with the church, and then one with Christ: but we are first one with Christ, and then one with the church; and our union with the church flows from our union with Christ; and not our union with Christ from our union with the church: Christ prays, *John*, xvi. *That they all*, that is, believers, *may be one in us*: So that our union is not first among ourselves, and then with the Son, and with the Father; but it is first with the Son, and with the Father, and then with one another in them: And Christ is the door, through which we enter into the church, and not the church the door through which we enter into Christ; For men may join themselves to believers, in the use of all outward ordinances, and yet never be joined to Christ, nor to that communion which believers have in Christ: but a man cannot be joined to Christ, but he is joined to all believers in the world, in the communion they have with Christ, and with one another in him; which, upon all occasions, he enjoys with them, wherever he meets with them. So that the true church is knit up together into one body and society, by one faith and spirit; the churches of men by an outward covenant or agreement only.

10. The churches of men have human officers, who act in the strength of natural or acquired parts, who do all by the help of study, learning, and the like: But in the true

church, Christ and the Spirit are the only officers, and men only so far as Christ and the Spirit dwell and manifest themselves in them: and so, when they do any thing in the church, it is not they that do it, but Christ and his Spirit in them, and by them: And therefore saith *Paul*, *Seek ye a proof of Christ speaking in me? which to you-wards is not weak, but mighty:* whoever is the instrument, Christ is the only preacher of the New Testament; and that which is the true gospel, is the ministration of the Spirit; for *holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit;* and were first anointed with the Spirit, before they preached.

11. The churches of men have the government of them laid on men's shoulders, whether single persons, as pope or archbishop; or combined, as the general council, or a national assembly; but the true church hath its government laid only on Christ's shoulders, as the prophet foretold, *Isai.* ix. *Unto us a child is born, a Son is given, and the government shall lie on his shoulders:* and *Zach.* vi. 12. *He shall build the temple of the Lord, &c. and he shall sit and rule upon his throne:* For none can rule the true church, but he that built it. For if the church be gathered together in Christ, as the true church is, Christ is always in the midst of them; and if Christ is ever present with them his own self, how cometh it to pass that Christ may not reign immediately over them? Wherefore the true church reckons it sufficient authority, that they have Christ and his word for the ground of their practice; and whatever they find in the word, they presently set upon the practice of it, and never ask leave, either of civil or ecclesiastical powers; but the churches of men do will nothing without the authority of the magistrate or assembly, though it be never so clear in the word of God: For in their religion, they regard the authority of men, more than the authority of God.

12. The churches of men are still setting themselves one above another; but the assemblies of the true church

are all equal, having Christ and the Spirit, equally present with them, and in them; and therefore, the believers of one congregation cannot say, they have power over the believers of another congregation; seeing all congregations have Christ and his Spirit alike among them, and Christ hath not any where promised, that he will be more with one than with another. And so Christ and the Spirit in one congregation, are not subjected, neither are subject to Christ and the Spirit in another congregation: as if Christ and the Spirit in several places, should be above and under themselves. But Christ, in each assembly of the faithful, is their head; and this head they dare not leave, and set up a fleshly head to themselves, whether it consist of one, or many men: seeing antichrist doth as strongly invade Christ's headship in many, as in one man; in a council, as in a pope.

Lastly: Against the churches of men, the gates of hell (which are sin and death) shall certainly prevail: but the true church of Christ, though the gates of hell do always fight against it, yet they shall never prevail against it; as Christ hath promised, *Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, Matt. xvi. 18.

In these things, among others, the true church of Christ differs from the churches of men: by which we may clearly see, that the true church is not an outward and visible society, or corporation, neither can it be pointed out by the finger, lo here, or lo there; seeing it is not confined to any certain place, time, or person, but is wholly a spiritual and invisible society, (as I have said) that is assembled in the Son and in the Father, who are the true pale and circumference of this church; and out of whom, no part of it is to be found.

Now hereupon it will presently be said, if the true church be invisible, as you have affirmed, then,

1. How shall we know it?

2. How can we join ourselves to it?

To both which, I hope, I shall return a clear answer: and first to this question,

How shall we know the true church, seeing it is invisible?

I answer; just so as Christ the head is known, is the church his body known, and no other way; now Christ is known,

1. By the revelation of the Father; when *Peter* confessed Christ to be *the Son of the living God*, Christ told him, *that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but his Father:* now the members of Christ can no more be known, without this revelation of the Father, than Christ the head of these members; seeing the apostle hath said, *that as he is, so are we in this world;* so that he hath need of other eyes than the world sees withal, that would discern the true church, and of another revelation than any that flesh and blood can make.

2. Christ was known by the Spirit's resting on him: *John* i. 33. *And I knew him not*, (said John Baptist) *but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit; and I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* After the same manner the church of Christ is known, to wit, by the Spirit's coming and remaining on it: So that whatever people have received the Spirit of Christ, of what sort or condition soever they be, they are the church of Christ; and they that are destitute of this Spirit, are not of the church.

3. Christ was known by the works he did: *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that you may know that the Father is in me, and I in him:* John x. 17. And thus also

is the true church known, by doing the works of Christ; seeing Christ hath said, *He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do, &c.* And thus the body of Christ is known by its living the life of the head, which is the life of faith and love; and the members of Christ are known by their doing the works of the head.

Thus then you see, that though the true church be spiritual, and cannot be known by our outward senses, yet we have certain tokens of her spiritual presence; whereby we may reckon, that in this or that place, there be certain of her members. As by a natural example; though the soul of man, in itself, be spiritual and invisible, and cannot be discerned by any of our outward senses, yet may we have sure tokens of its presence, by the effects and operations of the soul, in that body wherein it dwells; as the exercise of reason, understanding, discourse, &c. so likewise the true church, which is invisible in itself, may yet be known by some certain signs, as by the word of faith, which sounds no where but in the church, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; as also by the life of Christ, and the presence and operations of his Spirit, &c. And thus you see how the church, though it be spiritual, may be known.

Well, how can we be joined to such a spiritual and invisible church?

I answer; Is not Christ a spiritual and invisible head? And how canst thou be joined to such a head? Surely our joining to Christ, the head, and to the church, his body, is of one nature; and that which joins us to Christ, the head, will assuredly join us to the church, his body. Now, through faith and the Spirit only, are we joined to this head; and through faith and the Spirit only, are we joined to this body: and we cannot be of this spiritual body and society, but by being taken up into one faith and spirit with them: And so it is no more a difficult thing to

be joined to the true church, because it is spiritual and invisible, than to be joined to Christ himself upon the same account; that is, it is no more difficult to be joined to a spiritual and invisible body, than to a spiritual and invisible head; and all acknowledge Christ to be such a head, and all must acknowledge the church to be such a body.

If any shall say that they cannot presently agree to these things, because they have had far different apprehensions of the church heretofore: I desire all such to consider, that if the true church were only an outward and visible society and corporation of men, that were to be governed by outward and visible officers, according to outward and visible forms and orders, there would then be no great mystery in the church; for these things lie within the easy reach of every man's reason: But now, whole Christ is a great mystery, hid from ages and generations; that is, not only Christ, the head of the church, but also the church, the body of Christ: *Ephes.* v. 32. *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church:* And this latter mystery (though both indeed make up one and the same mystery) of the church, or Christ the body, can no more be known by human sense or reason, than the former of Christ the head; the revelation of the Father, and the anointing of the Spirit, being equally necessary, for the right knowledge of both. And, as antichrist hath had his mystery of iniquity, in opposition to Christ the head, in setting up a visible and carnal head, instead of the invisible and spiritual; so also, he hath had his mystery of iniquity in opposition to the church the body; in erecting a visible and carnal body or church, instead of an invisible and spiritual: for without all peradventure, the head and the body must be suitable each to other, and of the same kind and nature: And so, as a visible and carnal head, the pope was in no measure suitable to an invisible and spiritual body, the true church; so likewise, a visible and carnal

body, or church, made and constituted by a mixture of civil and ecclesiastical laws and power, is in no measure suitable to a spiritual and invisible head: But what a kind of head the true Christ is, such a kind of body or society the true church is, and both are spiritual and invisible. And as the Lord, in the former age, hath been pleased to reveal to the church the mystery of the Head, after a long time of its obscuring and darkening, under the reign of antichrist; so now we wait in hope, that he will, in this present age, reveal the mystery of the body, which hath been no less obscured than the former; that so the whole mystery of whole Christ, may both be known and accomplished among us, according to the riches of his glory, by the gospel. Wherefore, all the faithful are desired, as occasion serves, to make known what God hath taught them in this matter, to supply what is here spoken weakly and imperfectly.

And thus having declared what the true church of Christ is, and rectified some ancient and general mistakes touching it, I shall now proceed to make known from the clear and evident word, the true and only bonds of the church's union, peace and agreement, as the apostle hath delivered them to us by the Spirit: *Ephes.* iv. 4, 5, 6.

> *There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Where note in general, that among all these bonds of the church's unity, the apostle makes not so much as any mention of uniformity; indeed the *Rhemists* (being blinded) from this very place, urge and press uniformity, (which is the very word they use) as being the great and mighty engine, first to advance the mystery of iniquity to its throne, and after to preserve it there. But it will appear anon, by the apostle's doctrine, that no conformity, or

uniformity, are any bonds of the true church's peace and union; seeing the church is such a kingdom, as is not preserved in its peace by any outward forms and orders, as the kingdoms of the world are, but by inward principles: Wherefore I shall proceed to speak of those spiritual bonds of the spiritual church's unity, which the apostle names; and they are in number, seven; the first whereof is,

ONE BODY.

There is *one body*, saith *Paul:* The right church of Christ is but one body, consisting of many members; and this is not a natural or political, but a spiritual body, even the body of Christ. *Paul*, in several of his epistles, takes pleasure to set forth the unity of the church by this similitude; as in *Rom.* xii. 4, 5. *As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.* And again: 1 *Cor.* xii. 12. *As the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are but one body, so also is Christ:* Where he calls the body by the name of the head, both making up one Christ.

Now this unity of body comprehends believers of all ages, and of all sorts.

1. Of all ages; for all believers that have been in the world heretofore, or now are, or shall be hereafter, do all make up but one body of Christ, though born and brought forth of God in several times and ages of the world; as in a natural example, a child is not born all in a moment, but is brought forth by degrees; and though one part be born, and another not yet born, this doth not hinder unity of body in the child; so the bringing forth the church into the world in several ages, doth in no wise hinder this unity of body.

2. As this unity of body comprehends believers of all ages, so also of all sorts and conditions, *Jews* and *Gentiles*,

bond and free, &c. all which are made one body in Christ. *Paul*, in *Ephes.* ii. 15. speaking of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, saith, That *Christ of these twain* (who differed as much as mankind could) *hath made, in himself, one new man:* For Christ, melting these two, by his Spirit, which is as fire, causes each to depart from himself, and makes both together one new man, or body of Christ in himself; and thus makes peace: For as long as men remain different bodies, or men, there is no peace amongst them; but when Christ makes them one body in himself, he makes peace between them; unity of body being a most necessary bond of peace in the church; as the apostle testifies: *Col.* iii. 15. *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body.*

Now, from this unity of body in the true church, we may note very considerable things, all to our present purpose.

1. That unity of body in the church, flows from unity of head: for here the members do not first conspire into unity of body among themselves, and after choose a head to their body; but first, these members are united to the head, and then to one another in and with the head; and so, because there is but one true head, Christ, there is but one true body, the church.

2. As the members of the natural body are born such through a natural birth, before they do or can exercise any acts or offices suitable to such members, and do not first exercise such offices, and then are made such members; as for instance, the eye doth not first see, and then or therefore is made an eye in the body; or the ear first hear, and then or therefore is made an ear in the body: but the eye is first born an eye in the body, and then sees; and the ear is born an ear, and then hears, &c. So in the spiritual body of Christ, each Christian hath his membership, merely from a new or spiritual birth, and hath

his office from his membership; and not from any action or operation of his own, before he was a member. In this spiritual, as in the natural body, the eye is born an eye, and therefore it sees; and the foot is born a foot, and therefore it walks; and each believer is only that which he is through a new birth, and cannot be placed in such and such an office by men; no more than men can place a seeing eye, or walking foot, in the natural body, but they must be born there, ere they can be there. Each member in the true church, is born in his place and office by God, and is not placed there by man: and when the church perceives this grace in its members, it suffers them to exercise those places and offices in the body, in which God hath produced or brought them forth, by his Spirit.

3. This unity of body stands well with a difference or distinction of members, and the difference of members doth not hinder, but help the unity of body: for, saith *Paul, The body is not one member, but many; and if they were all one member, where were the body?* And therefore, in the body there are diversity of members, and each member hath its several form and office; *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? and if the whole were an ear, where were seeing, smelling, walking? &c.* So in the unity of Christ's body, there are diversity of members, with diversity of gifts and offices; and so, one hath the word of *wisdom, another the word of knowledge, another the word of faith, another the gift of healing, &c.* 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9. Every member in this body being in office, and having received the spirit to profit withal. And so again, *Rom.* xii. 6. *Having then gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us,* (he speaks of all the members of the body, which have some or other gifts given to them) *if it be prophesy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; if ministry, let us wait our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching, or he that exhorteth, on exhortation, &c.* So that, in the true

church, unity stands with diversity, but in the false, unity will not stand without uniformity.

4. In this true church, or one body of Christ, notwithstanding diversity of members and offices, there is still an equality among them all, seeing all alike make up one body; in which respect, one member is as necessary to the body as another, and no member can say to another, that I contribute more to the making up of the body than thou; the most honourable member cannot say thus to the most mean, not the apostles themselves to believers among the Gentiles; for we are the body of Christ, as well as they, and they are the body of Christ no more than we: wherefore no member, for diversity of office, is to lift up himself above another member, who is as necessary as itself to the making up the body, and also is every whit as useful in its place.

5. As in the natural body each member is contented with its own place and office in the body: so is every member, through the grace given unto it, contented with its place and office in the spiritual body, and not one either envies or despises another.

6. The members of the natural body do not each live to themselves, but all of them serve one another, and each of them serves all; as the eye sees for the foot, and the whole body and the hand works for the eye, and the whole body, &c. So among believers, none lives and acts for himself only, but each believer serves all, and all serve each one in love.

7. Members that are united into one body, have a true sympathy with one another, both in good and evil things: 1 *Cor.* xii. 26. *And whether one member suffer, and all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

8. Among the members of the body, there is no law of force, but only a law of love; no member compelling ano-

ther, but each member serving another by love: and if one member be infirm, the rest help it, and do not reject it: the more they care for it, and do not the more despise it.

And this now is the first bond of the true church's unity.

Unity of body.

Now they break this first bond of unity, that either live out of this one body of Christ, or else live in it, but not as members.

1. They that do content themselves in joining to some outward and visible society and corporation of men, though called a church, and think, that by being knit to them in ways of outward worship and ordinances, they live in the unity of the church, when as yet, all this while, they live out of that one body that is born of the Spirit, which is the only true church, and body of Christ: he that lives out of this spiritual body, though he live in the most excellent society in the world, yet he breaks the unity of the church, not living in one body with it. And thus many break the church's unity, that never think on it.

2. Again, they break this bond of the church's unity, that live in this one body, but not as members; and such are they, who, having got the advantage of the magistrate's power, will needs lift themselves up above their fellow-members, and exercise authoritative, coercive, domineering power over them: whereas the very apostles themselves were not lords of the church, but fellow-members with the faithful; living in one body, and under one head with them, and so did all by love and persuasion, and nothing by force and violence. Now those members that exalt themselves above their fellow and equal members, what do they else but usurp the place of the head; and so break in sunder the unity of the body, which stands in the unity of the head? He that, in a single or combined unity, sets himself up above other believers, by giving laws, and by prescribing and commanding forms and rules to those that are every way his equals, ad-

vances himself as another head besides Christ; and so antichrist is nearer to us than we are aware; and many men that are so forward and fierce, to make and enforce rules and orders, colourably to procure the church's peace, they are the first men that do themselves break this first bond of the church's unity, to wit, unity of body, which makes all believers equal members, equally subject to one head.

The second bond of the true church's unity, is,

ONE SPIRIT.

There is *one body, and one Spirit*, saith *Paul;* and through unity of Spirit they become one body. Now as the body of man consists of many members, and but one soul comprehends, quickens, moves, and governs all these members, making the eye to see, the hand to work, the foot to walk, &c. So the body of Christ, which is the church, consisting of many members, hath yet but one and the same Holy Spirit, which comprehends, quickens, moves and governs them all, and brings them into a most near and intimate society together, and enables each member, to its several office, according to its place and use in the body of Christ.

And as a member, being cut off from the body, the soul doth not follow it, to cause it to live out of the unity of the body: so he that is divided from the true body of Christ, the Spirit doth not follow him, to make him live single by himself; and so neither is the body of Christ without the Spirit, nor the Spirit of Christ without the body.

And as the same soul, in several members, acts severally, and yet is but one and the same soul in all; so the same Holy Spirit, in several believers, works severally, as it pleaseth, and yet is but the same Holy Spirit in them all.

So that the whole body of Christ, that is, all believers in the world, have but one and the same Holy Spirit in

them; and this unity of Spirit in the church, is one strong bond of its peace. Among mankind in general, and more nearly among kindred, there is unity of flesh; but because there is difference of spirit, there is much envy, hatred, strife and variance, in that unity of flesh; but now the members of the body are not only one flesh, but one soul or spirit too; and so there is always peace and agreement between them. And so the true church of Christ is not only one body, but one Spirit too; and this makes it one indeed. For as this Spirit is the love and connection of the Father and the Son; so it is also our love and connection in the Father and the Son; and as the Father and the Son live in unity of Spirit, so all believers live in the unity of the same Spirit in them.

Now they on whom the Spirit was first given, after Christ was glorified, had also with the Spirit, the gift of tongues; the Spirit given, being for the communion of the church, and so they spake with the tongues of all, the church having, through the communion of the Spirit, its society and consociation: For he that speaks by the Spirit in the church, where all are one Spirit in Christ, he speaks with the tongues of all; and when a believer hears another speak, it is as if he himself did speak; and when one speaks, it is as if all spake; for he speaks in the unity of Spirit with them, and so speaks the same doctrine of the gospel and mind of Christ, which they all have equally heard and learned from God.

Hence it is evident, that it is nothing to have the outward form of a church, even as our souls could wish, except there be inwardly, in that church, the Spirit of Christ; For it is not unity of form will ever make the church one, but unity of Spirit: That church then that is destitute of the Spirit, in its laws, orders, constitutions, forms, members, and officers: what true unity can that have in all its uniformity?

And this is the second bond of the true church's unity:

Unity of Spirit.

Now they break this bond of the church's unity, that live in their own spirits, and not in Christ's; for they that live in a different spirit from the true church, what unity can they possibly have with it? They then that live in their own human reason, understanding, thoughts, counsel, wills, and ends, they live quite out of the unity of this church, yea, in direct enmity against it: seeing our own corrupt and earthly spirits, are most contrary to the holy and heavenly Spirit of Christ, in which the church lives. Wherefore we may learn hence, what to judge of those men that cry out much for the peace of the church, and yet themselves neither live in, nor are led by, the spirit of the church; but either by their own spirits, or antichrist's.

2. They that labour to join men into one body with the church, that are not one spirit with it, do mar the peace of it: For as unity of spirit in the church is the bond of peace, so diversity of spirit is the breach of peace; and therefore, to preserve the peace of the church, none are to join themselves to this one body, that are not of this one spirit.

3. They that, being of the church, do any thing in it by their own spirits, and not by Christ's, prejudice the peace of the church; for the true church is such a body, which is to have all its communion in the Spirit. And therefore, when any pray or prophesy, or the like, in the strength of natural parts, or human studies and invention only, and do not pray and prophesy in the spirit, they break the unity of the church; for the faithful have communion with one another, only so far forth as the Spirit is manifested in each.

Now if any shall say, how may I know Christ's Spirit in these acts and duties, from a man's own?

I answer, That as, by the word of God, we can judge of all other words and doctrines; and as, by the faith of Christ, we can judge of all other beliefs; so by the Spirit of Christ, we can judge of all other spirits; and can know where is the same spirit, and where is a different, or a contrary spirit; as the members of the body can judge of the oneness of spirit that is among themselves.

The third bond of the true church's unity, is,

ONE HOPE OF OUR CALLING.

Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: As all believers are called by one calling (which is the inward and effectual voice of God to the soul, by his Spirit through the gospel) so they are all called into one blessed hope of obtaining the kingdom and glory of God. And no one is called to this hope more than another, or hath more interest or share in it than another. Fishes that live in the sea, though some be greater, and some less, yet none hath more interest or share in it than another; but all being alike produced in it, enjoy it alike: and creatures that live on the earth, though some be greater and some less, yet all enjoy the sun and air alike; and yet nearer, the members of the body, though of different quantity, form, and office, yet all have alike interest in the head and all its senses, and in the soul and all its faculties: So all the faithful enjoy Christ alike, and in him, the Spirit and the Father; and no believer hath more interest in Christ and God, than another.

So that all the faithful are called to the same things, and God gives not more or better things to one than to another, but he gives immortality, glory, eternal life, the kingdom of heaven, which is the inheritance of the saints, or which is all one, himself, alike to all, and makes all to sit alike in heavenly places in Christ, and in the Father.

All the faithful then are equally called to an unity of hope, and none can hope for greater or better things than another. It was a very carnal thing in the mother of *Zebedee's* children, to desire of Christ, that one of her sons might sit at his right hand, and another at his left hand, in his kingdom, where all alike sit at his right hand, and none at all at his left. Indeed, in the kingdoms of men, some have greater estates than others, and are in higher honour and authority; and this breeds envy, and emulation, and strife, and distance, &c. but in the Son's kingdom, and in the Father's, all that are counted worthy to dwell therein, do alike inherit all things; *All things are yours*, saith *Paul:* And *he that overcomes shall inherit all things*, saith *John:* And the least believer hath no less, and the greatest hath no more; and this causes unity and peace among them. We see what a strong bond of peace and agreement, and unity of hope, is in them that travel together, that fight together, that labour together; and so, much more in them who are equally called by God, to the kingdom of God.

And this is the third bond of the true church's unity.

Unity of hope.

Now they break this bond of the church's unity, that live out of this hope of the church; whose hope is in earthly, carnal, base things; who, pretending to be Christians, yet live only in the hopes of men, in hopes of worldly profit, honour, preferment, and the attaining and enjoyment of the things of this life, which they, according to the eagerness of their hopes, prosecute mightily, by all ways and means. These men, I say, break the unity of the church: for what true unity can they have with the true church, that live not in unity of hope with it? Seeing worldly hopes carry men one way, and the hopes of believers carry them another: carnal hopes make men leave God for the world; and the hope of saints makes them

leave the world for God: Wherefore, they that differ in their hopes, which are their ends, must needs differ in their ways and works; and so, he that lives out of the hope of the church, lives also out of the unity of it.

The fourth bond of the true church's unity, is,

ONE LORD.

The right church hath not many Lords, but One; and this one and only Lord, is the Lord Jesus Christ: And so all the subjects of this kingdom are fellow-servants to one Lord, to whom they do own equal obedience; and this also is a strong bond of unity.

For when there are divers Lords, there are divers minds, and wills, and ends, and so divers laws; and these breed divisions, and dissensions, and wars among men; but where there is but one Lord, there is also but one law; and where people live by one law, under one Lord, unto whom all are equally subject, this breeds peace and union.

Now the Lordship of the church, is the royal prerogative of Christ, and no creature must presume to arrogate this honour to himself; seeing, unto the very angels he hath not put in subjection this world to come, whereof we speak. And for men, Christ hath charged his own apostles (who, if there were any difference among believers, might undoubtedly challenge the pre-eminence) I say, Christ hath charged even them on this sort: *Matt.* xxiii. 10. *Be not ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant:* That is, you may and ought to be servants to one another, but not masters: and this same doctrine, the apostle *James* preacheth: *My brethren*, saith he, *be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation:* Jam. iii. 1. It is not fit for brethren, who are equal among themselves, to make themselves masters over one another. Christ also hath spoken again so plainly to this matter: *Matt.* xx. that one

would wonder, that ever the beast, or his image, should dare to arrogate to themselves lordship over the people of God, in so clear a light; *Ye know* (saith Christ to the twelve) *that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them: but it shall not be so amongst you:* He speaks it peremptorily; that some believers should not exercise dominion and authority over other believers; no, not the greatest over the least, all being fellow-servants alike, under one Lord. Wherefore, they that are puffed up in their hearts against their fellow-servants, might better think thus with themselves, why Christ is our Lord, as well as theirs, and is as much over us as over them: and we are not over our fellow-servants, nor they under us; but both of us are equally under Christ, and Christ is equally over us both; and so Christ hath given us the same laws he hath given them; to wit, that we should believe in him, and love one another; and he expects the same obedience from us, as from them; and so we are not to command one another; but are all alike to be commanded by him. It was the evil servant, that beat his fellow servants, upon hopes of the delay of his master's coming.

And this is the fourth bond of the true church's unity.

Unity of Lord.

Now they break this bond of the church's unity, that either make themselves, or others, lords over the church, besides Christ, and parcel out this one kingdom of the Son, to many lords, to the great dishonour of Christ, and disunion of the church.

The pope was the first that professed himself to be the general master in the whole church of God; and after the *pope*, a *general council* took this honour to itself; and by degrees, this last became as hard, yea, a harder taskmaster to the church than the former. Afterwards, when particular kingdoms fell off from the pope, and his antichristian

church, the mystery of iniquity was not, by this means, wholly dissolved; but only was contracted, and brought into a less compass; for then the *archbishop* made himself general master of the church in each particular kingdom, as the *pope* before had done in all; and after the *archbishop* raises up a *national assembly*, as the *general council* after the *pope;* and each of these, in their courses, usurp lordship over the church of Christ, to the sad dissolution of its unity.

Most evident then it is, that during the time of the apostacy, the church hath been most miserably lorded over, even amongst us; for the priest lorded over the people, the archdeacon over the priest, the dean over the archdeacon, the bishop over the dean, and the archbishop over the bishop; under which woful bondage, the church cried out, as *Isai.* xxvi. *O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us.* And is this bondage of the church now eased, by casting off those strange lords? Yea, do not men rather seek to increase it, by setting yet stranger over it, whose names are so full of mystery, that the common people cannot understand them? for now they would have the classical presbytery set over the congregational, and the provincial over the classical, and the national over the provincial; for so it is voted, THAT IT IS LAWFUL, AND AGREEABLE TO THE WORD OF GOD, THAT THERE BE A SUBORDINATION OF CONGREGATIONAL, CLASSICAL, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES, FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH: Now here is mystery, and nothing but a certain rising up into the old power, under a new name. And mark how they prove this subordination of congregational, classical, provincial and national assemblies, to wit, by that scripture, *Matt.* xviii. where it is written, *If thy brother trespass against thee, and will neither hear thy admonition nor counsel, nor the admoni-*

tion and counsel of other brethren, TELL THE CHURCH; that is, the congregation of the faithful. Now from this place they prove the fore-mentioned subordination of assemblies; just as the pope once proved himself to be above the emperor, to wit, because it is written, *Gen.* i. *That God made two great lights, the sun to rule by day, and the moon by night.* Now if this might be brought about, which they design, the church would be so far from being eased of its strange lords, that it should have them exceedingly multiplied: for what is a national assembly, but an archbishop multiplied? And what a provincial assembly, but a bishop multiplied? And a classical, but a dean and archdeacon multiplied? And thus the former lords being removed, they would, in their stead, cause the church to swarm with classical, provincial, and national lords, and would by no means suffer Christ's own kingdom to return to his own lordship and dominion. And thus, whilst they, by secular power, seek to enforce these ecclesiastical lords over the church, they absolutely break in pieces the unity of it, even whilst they bear the simple people in hand, that they, above all other men, seek to preserve it: seeing the plurality of lords is always the cause of schisms and divisions in the church, which can never be one, but under one Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fifth bond of the true church's unity, is,

ONE FAITH.

The true church of God hath but one faith, wrought by one Spirit, apprehending the same Christ, or the same living and eternal truth of God. So that *Abraham*, and *Moses*, and *David*, and all the prophets, and all the apostles, and we who now believe, and all that shall believe hereafter, all have, and do, and shall live in the same mystery of faith; that is, believers in all ages do not live their own lives, but all live the life of Christ in their own souls and bodies, each one receiving equally from Christ: the

life of Christ, which they all live alike in him, being one with him; as the branches live equally the life of the vine; and one branch lives it not more than another. Through faith, then, every Christian is carried out of himself, and all his own things, into Christ, whom he apprehends with all his fulness, for his own; and in this faith, all Christians are equal, and none hath a better or worse faith than another.

So that, in regard of faith also, there is among the true church, unity and equality.

For all believers have one and the same faith of the operation of God, wrought by the same Spirit which raised up Christ from the dead; and that faith which the Spirit works, neither sin, death, nor the devil, can possibly prevail against; and so the faith of the operation of the Spirit, is altogether invincible in all the faithful.

Among true Christians, some are not justified by faith, and some by works, but all are saved through faith, without the works of the law.

Among true Christians, one believer's faith doth not apprehend one word, and another's another word; but the faith of each, and of all, apprehends one and the same word of truth and life, which is Christ himself, "Yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever."

Among believers, one doth not live his own life, and another Christ's, which indeed would make them very different and unequal; but all live Christ's life alike, and none their own.

And thus is the whole church knit together in unity of faith.

Now this unity of faith is mightily able to preserve peace among believers, notwithstanding diversity, either of inward gifts, or outward works.

1. Unity of faith preserves peace, notwithstanding diversity of inward gifts; inasmuch as we are not made mem-

bers of Christ's body, through such and such gifts, but merely through faith; and so he that hath one, or a less gift, is equally a member of Christ, through his faith, with him that hath another, or a greater gift; and so unity of faith, which makes us all one body in Christ, is to keep us one, notwithstanding diversity of gifts and operations; and diversity of gifts are in no wise to divide, where there is unity of faith. Further, among them that believe, where there is the more gift, there is only the more labour; but there is not another or a better Christ; and where there is the less gift, there is the same Christ, equally enjoyed through faith: He that had five talents given him, brought in five that he had gained; and he that had ten, ten: but he that brought in most talents, had not more of Christ than he that brought in fewer; and he that brought in fewer, had not less of him than he that brought in more; but each, having Christ alike by faith, brought in the exercise of his several gifts. And so, unity of faith is to keep us one, notwithstanding diversity of inward gifts.

And secondly, it is to keep us one, notwithstanding diversity of outward works. For unity of faith makes all believers righteous alike, though they differ in outward works: for in Christ's kingdom, each one's righteousness is reckoned by his faith, not by his outward works. And therefore, *Paul, Heb.* xiii. 7. having reckoned up many excellent works of the fathers, doth not enjoin us to follow their works, but their faith; saying, *Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation;* seeing the unity of the church stands in unity of faith; and there may be unity of faith in diversity of works; for faith uses freely any outward laws, manners, forms, works, so far as they may tend to the mortifying of our bodies, and the edifying of our neighbours: wherein faith also will judge for itself, and will suffer no body to judge for it: and in

all change of works, faith is the same, and changes not; and the church still remains one, through unity of faith, in the midst of variety and diversity of outward works. And therefore, where men are accounted Christians for such and such outward works sake, and this unity of faith is not taught and received, there the gates of hell do certainly prevail.

And this is the fifth bond of the true church's unity.

Unity of faith.

Now they break this bond of the church's unity, that live out of this faith of God's elect; seeing it is written, *That the just shall live by faith:* And therefore, they that live by sense, in the things of the world, or by form in the things of God, they live out of this faith and unity of the church.

1. They that live by sense, in the things of the world, break this bond of the church's unity; even such as mind, and affect, and love, and desire, earthly things, and have all their joy, comfort, sweetness, satisfaction, support, and confidence, in the creature; these live out of the unity of the church; seeing the life of sense is quite contrary to the life of faith: Faith carrying us to live in God, out of the creature, and sense carrying us to live in the creature, out of God.

2. They that live by form in the things of God, whether it be called conformity, as the prelates called it: or uniformity, as the *Rhemists*, do also break this bond of the church's unity. For, to live upon this or that form of religion, or worship, so as to think ourselves good Christians therefore, and others evil, that shall live otherwise, is to fall apparently from the faith of the church; seeing faith doth not live upon this or that form of religion, but it lives on Christ only in every duty; and whatsoever form it may use, for a help to the infirmity of the flesh, yet in

the use of forms, it lives above forms in Jesus Christ, and his fulness.

The sixth bond of the true church's unity, is,

ONE BAPTISM.

The true church, which is the body or flesh of Christ, hath but one and the self-same baptism, by which it is purified; which is the baptism of the Spirit: For the apostle speaks here of that baptism, wherein the whole church is one; which is not the baptism of the sign, which hath often been altered and changed, but the baptism of the substance, which comprehends all believers, and all ages, and under several and various dispensations; and was the same before Christ's coming in the flesh, as since; believers, both of the Jews and Gentiles, of the Old and New Testament, drinking all alike into one spirit, though these more plentifully than those: So that, though many have wanted the baptism of water, yet not one member of the true church hath wanted the baptism of the Spirit, from whence our true Christianity begins.

Now this baptism of the Spirit, is the only baptism that hath power and efficacy to make Christians one: For, through the baptism of the Spirit, it is, that the church is made one body, as *Paul* saith: 1 *Cor.* xii. 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit:* The true church drinks all into one Spirit (as ye have heard) and not into many; and through one Spirit are baptized into one body, and not into many; and believers are never truly one, till they partake of this one baptism.

Now this baptism of the Spirit, as it is but one, so it is administered only by one Christ; as *John* Baptist witnesseth, saying, *I indeed baptize you with water, unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit,*

and with fire, Matt. iii. 11. For as none can give the Son, but the Father, so none can baptize with the Spirit, but the Son; for this is Christ's proper and peculiar baptism from the throne of his glory, and no man's whatsoever; this he hath reserved in his own power, and hath not given it into any man's power.

And this is the sixth bond of the true church's unity.

One Baptism.

Now they break this bond of the church's unity, that content themselves only with the baptism of water, being destitute of the baptism of the Spirit; and so remain in the uncleanness of all their old corruptions and lusts, and in all the filthiness and pollutions of flesh and spirit; by reason of which, they can have no true peace and agreement in heart, and spirit, and nature, with those who are cleansed from these pollutions, and are washed and justified, purified and sanctified in the name, and by the Spirit of God: For what agreement can there be between them that live in all the corruptions of sinful men, and them that live in the renewing of the Holy Spirit? So that it is not the washing of water, but the washing of the Spirit, that is the true ground of the true church's unity; and they that want this baptism of the Spirit, though they have been baptized with water never so much, live quite out of the unity of the church.

The seventh bond of the church's unity, is,

ONE GOD AND FATHER OF
ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL,
AND THROUGH ALL,
AND IN YOU ALL.

And this, though it be last named, is the first fountain and original of the church's unity, even *one God and Father of all.*

The true church is a kingdom of brethren, who have

all one God and Father, from whom all receive alike the divine nature; which being one and the same in all, without any difference, makes them all one and equal, that are born of God. For among these, none have a better Father than another, neither have any a more excellent nature than another, but all receive the same nature from the same God and Father; and so are brethren in the Lord; and this also is another strong bond of unity.

For they having all one God and Father; First, all are alike dear to him, because all are alike born of him, and so he loves not one more or less than another, but comprehends all in one and the same love with Jesus Christ. And this truly known, will restrain believers from wronging one another, when they know that such are every whit as dear to God as themselves; and that God hath as great and tender love to them, and care over them.

Secondly, All are alike near to us, because of this one God and Father; and so among true Christians, there can be no such divisions, and factions, and sidings, as among worldly people; because one Christian is not nearer to us than another, and so we do not take part with one against another, but all are alike near to us; and so without any respect of persons we embrace all that are born of God, with an equal love, and seek the good of each one, yea, of every one as well as any one.

Now this God and Father of the church, he farther describes that he is,

1. ABOVE ALL; The Father is above the children, and they are not above one another, but he is above them all, ruling and over-ruling them; and so they are not to live in their own wills, which might cause difference, but in their Father's will, which causes unity; and thus his being above them all, keeps them in peace; whereas we see, where children live without due subjection, having no body above them,

as it falls out sometimes among orphans, there they are often unquiet and grievous to one another: But God is above all his children, and so keeps them in due subjection to him, and in quietness and love with one another, daily composing their differences through his unity.

2. He is, THROUGH ALL; as having communicated to all his own nature; and so according to this nature of his, which he hath communicated to all alike, and all alike possess, he is through them all. And hereupon they all must needs be one, because God never differs from himself, but his nature is at unity with itself in all, in whom it dwells; and brings them all out of the differences of their natures, into the unity of God's.
3. He is, IN THEM ALL. God is such a Father as hath his presence in all his children; he hath a special presence in them, dwelling in them after the manner he dwelt in Christ, though not in that measure; for God dwells in Christ and Christians otherwise than in the rest of the creatures; to wit, by communicating his nature to them through his union with them: And wherever God communicates his nature, there he is present most truly, powerfully, and gloriously indeed: And such a presence of God in his church as this, keeps it in constant and unchangeable unity: For how can they who have God thus dwelling in them, and who again thus dwell in God, be at odds among themselves?

And this is the seventh bond of the true church's unity,

ONE GOD AND FATHER, &c.

Now they break this bond of the church's unity, who have not this one God and Father of the church to be their God and their Father; who will needs call God Father, and yet are none of his children; who will be of

the church of God, and yet are not born of God ; and so live according to their own natures, and not according to God's ; all these, I say, break the unity of the church, seeing we can no longer live in peace, than this one God and Father is above us, and through us, and in us. All they then that will needs be members of the church through outward profession, and yet are none of this spiritual brotherhood, as having no descent from this heavenly Father, they break this unity of the church, even all the children that are only born after the flesh, and so still live according to the natures of men, and are not born of the Spirit, to live after the nature of God.

These now are the seven bonds of the true church's true unity and peace ; and there is no other bond of unity necessary for the church, besides these : For if there had, the apostle, being guided by the Spirit, would never have omitted it. And therefore the more are they to blame, who making a great noise, and lifting up their voice on high for unity, peace and agreement in the church, yet do wholly neglect these seven bonds of the true church's unity ; and cry up one instead of them all ; and that is external uniformity. So that now, among them, *one body*, and *one Spirit*, and *one hope of our calling*, and *one Lord*, and *one faith*, and *one baptism*, and *one God and Father of all*, are nothing at all to the church's unity, but their uniformity is all in all ; and whoever breaks that (which yet they have no scripture of God to enjoin, no nor once to name) he is the man with them, that breaks the church's peace ; and so, antichrist-like, they have exalted their single uniformity above this seven-fold unity of the church, and so have (as much as in them lies) made the word of the Spirit void, through their carnal (that I say no more) traditions. For a man may break all these seven bonds of the church's unity, and yet be a very good member of their church, if he only observes their uniformity ; but if he break this

he is a schismatic, and an heretic, and not worthy to live in their account, though he live in all the bonds of this true and spiritual unity.

Wherefore, to escape these snares, let all believers know assuredly, that these seven bonds named by the apostle, which are all spiritual, and of God, and not one of them carnal, or of man, are the only bonds of the true church's true unity; and that whoever, of their own minds, presume to add to these, are guilty of adding to the word of God, themselves being but wretched creatures; and so involve themselves in all the curses written in his book, among which death and hell have their place. And let us further know, that whoever do combine together to make themselves one, out of the fore-named unity, though they call themselves the church never so much, yet they are but sects, and schisms, and divisions, and factions, rent from the true church of God: for such men choose and frame to themselves some singular way of worship, form, order, &c. whereby they think they excel other Christians, and so cause the simple and ignorant (which are the multitude of people) to follow them; especially, having countenance of worldly authority: by which means, both they and their followers depart from the true unity of the church: For when this seven-fold spiritual unity is neglected, Christianity is torn in pieces, into as many sects as the world and devil please, till there be no footsteps left, either of faith or love. So that whatever these men pretend, most certain it is, that all confederacies in the church, of outward orders, forms, rites, laws, ceremonies, disciplines, which are necessarily enforced by the secular power, seduced by the ecclesiastical, will never hold the church together; but all these are, and have proved, and will prove, rather a wall of partition in the church, than a bond of union; and if they seem to work union, yet it is no other

than the mingling clay and iron together, which no pains nor art can perfectly compound. For all peace and union in the church, knit by other bonds than are here named, is no spiritual union, neither will it stand.

And therefore, dear Christians and Believers, seeing we have seven bonds of unity, all of God's own making, to make us one, let not diversity of forms and rites, which are but sorry things of man's making, separate and divide us: but seeing each of these bonds are able to make us one, how much one should all of them together make us?

And thus having shewed from the word, how all Christians and believers are made one by God; the next thing I shall aim at, is, to shew how they may continue one among themselves, in reference to that communion they have with one another whilst they sojourn in this world, flowing from the former union; that so all darkness and mistakes, which now even many believers are grievously inwrapped in, may be dispelled and done away, and we may live in this pure and perfect union with one another in God, making all outward things subservient hereunto, and none of them prejudicial.

And to this purpose I conceive, we are,

1. To know some things: and,
2. To do other things:

And both otherwise than yet we seem, either to know or do them.

1. To preserve our peace we have in Christ, we must be instructed aright in the matter of the church's government, because the mistake in this thing is so great a cause of controversy and division among us at this day. For if the true church hath its true government without any such forms and laws, and power, as is now so earnestly contended for, there is no reason we should fall out and divide for these things.

Now the government of the church, is two-fold.

1. There is that government which God exercises immediately by himself. And,

2. That government which he exercises mediately, and by the faithful.

The first of these, that is, God's immediate government, is also two-fold:

1. The government of his special providence.

2. The government of his spiritual presence.

The first sort of God's immediate government of his church, is the government of his special providence, and this is a most strange, wonderful, and glorious government. This was that government of God over the church of *Israel*, when he took his own nation out of the midst of another nation, by temptations, signs, wonders, by a strong hand, and a stretched-out arm, and great terrors; when he led them through the red sea, and through the wilderness, in paths that were not trodden; when he fed them with bread from heaven, and water out of the rocks; when he *suffered no man to do them wrong, but reproved even kings for their sake;* and through multitudes of enemies and oppositions, led them into the land of *Canaan*. Thus, God led that church from bondage to liberty, from tribulation to quietness, from a sordid condition to honour and renown, from a strange land to a land of inheritance, and from slavery to a kingdom. And this was a glorious government indeed, standing in God's immediate conduct from heaven, far above all human councils, wisdom, stratagems, or any thing else of man's contriving and acting: and this government of God is so far beyond all human apprehensions, that according to this, it is said, *His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.*

And is not this kind of God's government of the spiritual church of the New Testament, every whit as wonder-

ful and glorious as was that of the visible church of the Old Testament? For though the beginning of it was small and low in the world, yet did it receive increase with the increase of God, and was preserved, maintained and enlarged in the world, notwithstanding all the rage and cruelties of the persecuting heathen emperors, for three hundred years together; and ever since, God himself hath taken the conduct of this church, and hath carried it through difficulties, distresses, reproaches, prisons, torments, deaths; to ease, liberty, comfort, joy, salvation, glory, life, and happiness; and this hath been God's glorious government of the church hitherto. And at this present time, the church of God wants not this government, among all the troubles, confusions, wars, and desolations of the kingdom; but God is now as near his true church as ever, and supports and comforts it, and guides it as a skilful pilot, in such sort, that though the floods lift up their voice and billows against it, yet they cannot sink it: for *the Lord on high is mightier than the mighty waves of the sea:* And so still, even at this day, the Lord leads his flock through the midst of wolves and lions, yea, through the midst of devils, in admirable and invincible safety, and gives them light in darkness, counsel in difficulties, and success in all attempts, above and beyond, both all the power, and all the expectation of the world.

Now note here, that this kind of government of the church, God doth not manage according to the wisdom and thoughts, no not of his very people, but wholly according to the counsel of his own will, and the thoughts of his own heart: doing things that they must not know yet, but must know afterwards; yea, such things, as for the present seem absurd, and absolutely destructive. And this is the usual way and order of God's governing his saints. That of *Luther*, on *Gen.* xxxix. is worth our

minding here. "I saith he, (*l*) have often endeavoured to prescribe certain ways and methods to God, which he should use in the governing of his church. Ah Lord, said I, I would have this to be thus done, in this order, with this event. But God did altogether contrary to what I did desire. Then again, thought I, why, my counsel is not differing from the glory of God, but it will make much for the sanctifying of thy name, the gathering and increasing thy kingdom, the propagating the knowledge of thy word; and, to be brief, it is a most excellent and profitable design. But God, no doubt, laughed at this wisdom of mine, and said, Go to now, I know thee to be wise and learned, but this was never my manner, that either *Peter* or *Martin* [meaning himself] should teach, or form, or govern, or lead me. For I am not a passive, but an active God, who use always to lead, govern, form. Now, saith he, it is very grievous, that our wisdom should be only passive, and that we are commanded to mortify and slay it: and therefore, many who could not endure this mortification, have fallen horribly." And thus this kind of God's government is wholly according to his own wisdom and counsel, and wholly without, yea, contrary to ours. And thus we are in some measure acquainted with the government of God's special providence over his church.

2. The second sort of God's immediate government of his church, is the government of his spiritual presence, or God's government within us. For the right church is the city of God, and hath God in the midst of it, being built and framed, and that according to every part of it, by the Spirit, to be the habitation of God; this is *the temple of the living God*, as God hath said, and God is in it of a truth: And if any would know what this church is call-

(*l*) Ego sæpe certas rationes conatus sum Deo præscribere, quibus uteretur, in administratione ecclesiæ, &c. *Luther*, in *Gen.* xxxix. *tom.* 6. *fol.* 542.

ed, the name of it is, THE LORD IS THERE. And so the whole guiding and ordering of this church depends wholly on God, who dwells within it. For God will not dwell in his own church; and sit still, whilst others that are without it shall govern it; but the government of the right church lies on his shoulders, who is *Immanuel*, God with us, and in us. And so this government of the church, is one of the invisible things of God in the church: Christ, who fills it, governing it by a most present and powerful, but invisible influence, leading it into truth, by the spirit of truth; into patience, by the spirit of patience; into love, by the spirit of love; into power, by the spirit of power; into humility, meekness, patience, heavenly-mindedness, and into the fulness of all righteousness, by that spirit which contains all these graces in itself, and works them in all those, in whom it dwells. In this government we hear the voice behind us, saying, *This is the way, walk in it*, when we turn either to the right hand, or to the left. In this government we have not outward laws to order us, as the kingdoms of the world have, but an inward law written in our hearts by the Spirit of God: as God hath said, *I will write my law in their hearts, and in their inward parts;* and this law is the word of life: for the living church or body of Christ, can only be governed by a living word, which is called, *the law of the Spirit of life.*

And according to this government also, God guides the true church wonderfully, the soul not seeing the ways and counsels of God, whereby he forms and fashions the church according to his own mind and good pleasure, quite contrary to human reason and judgment; for he brings them to mourning, to bring them to comfort; brings them to despair, to bring them to faith; to death, to bring them to life; yea, even to hell, to bring them to heaven: leading his chosen people after such a manner,

that nothing would follow but faith, which "looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." And thus, when the soul is in the midst of many fears, woes, agonies, temptations, till it feel in good earnest, the true sorrows of death, and pains of hell, and in this darkness sees no beam, nor the least glimmering of light; and wants all counsel, and knows not which way to turn itself: then Christ comes and manifests himself to the soul, and counsels, and directs, and comforts it; and leads it into the path of life, and redeems it from all distress, subduing the world, and the devil, and sin, and death, and hell under it; yea, and carrying it into all the fulness of God.

Now these two sorts of governments, to wit, the one of his special providence, and the other of his spiritual presence, the true church never wanted in any age: And in this present age, when the prelatical government hath been dissolved for several years together; can any Christian think, that the right church of Christ hath been without all government? Nay, all this while it hath been governed most powerfully by his special providence, and most sweetly by his spiritual presence; So that neither the world nor the devil have been able to prevail neither against its grace nor comforts: And for an outward, formal, visible, enforced government, after the manner of civil corporations, or worldly kingdoms; the true church can as well want such a government at all times, as at any time; yea, and it is best without it, as being farthest removed from the tyranny of men, and more immediately under the government of Christ, its only king and lawgiver.

And therefore, they that are so violent for an outward and visible government of the church, after the manner of the kingdoms of the world: I do heartily wish, that if it be the good pleasure of God, they might some time or

other be exercised with temptations of despair, and with the sense of the wrath of God, and everlasting burnings: For by this means their idle and vain thoughts and speculations of governing the church of God by human power and methods, would soon vanish; and they would soon give over troubling themselves, and the faithful, about things that have neither power in them to free from eternal death, nor to procure eternal life.

And thus much for that two-fold government of the church, which God himself exercises immediately in and over it: whereof we must not be ignorant, if we desire to preserve the peace of the church, both in ourselves and others.

Now besides this immediate government of God, there is another sort of government of the church, which Christ exercises mediately by the church: And this also is Christ's government, and not man's; and men who have not known nor understood the former government of Christ, have mistaken this also, through the same unbelief; wherefore they, not so much as minding the former government of Christ, which is immediate, and by himself, have made this mediate government of the church by man, to be all; and this also, I say, they have understood most grossly and carnally, and not according to the word, but according to their own ignorant and seduced hearts. I shall not trouble the reader with their particular misapprehensions in this matter; seeing it is far more profitable to content ourselves with the plain and evident truth, than to inquire after variety of errors. Wherefore, letting alone their darkness, I shall only endeavour that the light of the word may shine unto us in this matter, that herein also we may be taught of God, if it be the will of God.

This mediate government then of Christ in the true church, I conceive to be nothing but this, Christ's order-

ing all things by the faithful, among the faithful, in reference to the communion of saints.

Now because many Christians desire instruction and light in this matter, I shall be willing to hold forth to them that measure of knowledge which I have received herein; being desirous also to learn myself of them that can teach me better by the word. And that I may proceed the more distinctly, I shall propound several things, to which I shall speak in order; and they be these:

1. To whom Christ hath committed the power of ordering and managing all things in the true church, in reference to the communion of saints.
2. What kind of power this is, which the true church hath.
3. What is the extent of this power.
4. What is the outward instrument of it.
5. What the true church can do by virtue of it. And this comprehends these particulars.

1. It can gather itself together.
2. It can appoint its own order.
3. It can choose its own officers; and, if need be, reform them, or depose them.
4. It can call its own councils.
5. It can judge of all doctrines, both of its officers and councils.

And all these things I reckon needful for the true church to know, for the preserving among themselves that peace and unity they have in Christ.

Tho first thing then is,

1. To whom Christ hath committed the power of ordering and managing all things in the true church, in reference to the communion of saints.

I answer; He hath given it to the true church itself, as formerly described, even to each and all the members

of it: for as natural power belongs to all natural men alike, so spiritual power (which is the true church power) to all spiritual men alike. Christ in a believer is the root of true church-power; and because Christ dwells in all believers alike, through unity of faith: therefore all believers partake alike of spiritual and supernatural power; and no one partakes of this power more than another, any more than he partakes of Christ more than another; but Christ in them all is the self-same power of God, to do all things that are to be done in the kingdom of God.

And according to this sense, that place in *Matt.* xvi. 19. is to be understood; where Christ saith to *Peter; And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* The pope and papal church, under colour of this place, have made great merchandise, and have exceedingly abused, and cheated the nations, for many hundred years together; but the light of the gospel hath shined forth, and the days of their traffic are at an end: And yet since, others have been trucking with the world, by their false interpretations of this place, and have thought to use it to their great advantage; but the day hath so far dawned that their shadows also are flying away.

But not to keep you longer from the words themselves; *Peter* had said to Christ, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God:* And Christ replied to *Peter*, *Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, which is in heaven;* and then adds, *unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.* that is, not to *Peter*, as an apostle, or minister, but as a believer, who had the revelation of the Father, touching the Son: and so also, they are given equally to each faithful Christian, who hath the same revelation with *Peter*, as also to the whole commu-

nion of saints. And so, these keys are not given to any particular person or persons, consisting of flesh and blood, or employed in such or such an office; but that man, whoever he be, that hath the revelation of the Father, he it is to whom these keys are given, and to none else: and so they are given to each believer in particular, and to the whole church of believers in general.

But what are these keys, about which there hath been so great ado in the church?

I answer; They are not any outward ecclesiastical power whatever, that men have devised to serve their own turns withal; but to pass by the many false conceits, wherewith many former and present writers have, and do still, trouble the church; *John* doth tell us plainly, *John* xx. 22. what *Matthew* means by the keys of the church. Christ, saith he, appearing to his disciples after his resurrection, breathing on them, said, *Receive the Holy Spirit*, [here are the keys of the kingdom of heaven] and then adds, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained;* that is, when ye have received the Spirit, then you have received the keys, to bind and loose, to remit and retain sin; and that not according to your wills, but wholly according to the mind, and will, and direction of the Spirit. And so Christ, before his ascension, gave these keys truly to his disciples, but more solemnly and fully at the day of pentecost; when the Spirit was given by Christ glorified: and afterwards the Gentiles, who, by the preaching of *Peter*, received the Spirit, even as the apostles did, they also received these keys; and so all that have received the Spirit, have the keys of the kingdom equally committed to them, and the power of binding and loosing by the ministration of the Spirit. And so these keys appertain, not only to greater congregations of Christians, but to the very least communion of saints; as Christ hath promised, *Where two or three are met together in my name, there*

am I present in the midst of them : Where we see, that two or three gathered together in Christ's name, have as much power as *Peter*, and all the apostles ; because Christ is equally present with these, as with those. Again, Christ hath commanded, that *if the offending brother will not hear the admonition of two or three other brethren, the offended brother should tell the church*, Matt. xviii. 17. Now the church is not the officers, but the congregation of the faithful ; seeing men are not of the church through any office, but only through faith. And by all these things it is evident, that the power of church-government, that is, the power of acting and ordering all things among the faithful, belongs to every faithful man alike, in the congregation of the faithful.

2. What kind of power this is, which the true church hath.

I answer in general, that it is a power suitable to the church or kingdom whereof it is the power : now as the church we speak of, is that church which is born of God and of the Spirit, and so is not at all of this world ; so the power that is agreeable to this church, is the power of God and his Spirit, and not at all of this world ; that is, it is not any civil or secular power ; I may add nor any ecclesiastical power (according to the common understanding it) that hath any place in the true church ; but merely a spiritual and heavenly power, without any conjunction or mixture of the other ; seeing Christ's power is perfect, and every way sufficient for his own kingdom, and Christ's kingdom is God's kingdom as well as the Father's : and so men may as well carry worldly and secular power into the Father's kingdom, as into the Son's, seeing this is no other than the kingdom of God, though it be among men ; and no other than the kingdom of heaven, though it be upon earth ; which hath not been understood

nor considered by them who have been so busy to bring secular power into a spiritual kingdom, as if Christ's own power, in his own kingdom, were either weak or imperfect.

More particularly, this true power of the true church, is, as I said, Christ's power in the faithful, which is the self-same with Christ's power in himself; and so,

1. It is not a power of violence, but a power of influence, even such a power as the head hath over the members, and the soul over the body; it is not a coercive, but a persuasive power; a power that makes men willing that are not willing, and doth not force the unwilling against their wills.
2. This power is humble, and not proud, as worldly power is; for the power of the world sets men over others; but the power of the church sets men under others; *I*, saith Christ of himself, *am among you as one that serves:* and again, *He that will be the chief among you, let him be the servant of all.*
3. This power is *for edification, and not for destruction;* 2 *Cor.* x. 8. as *Paul* acknowledges, again and again, that *the power the Lord gave him*, was this, and no other power, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 10. namely, *not to cast men out of their native kingdoms, but to translate them into God's kingdom;* not to take away their outward liberties or estates, but to bring them into the liberty and inheritance of the saints: to bring men to eternal life, and not to destroy men by temporal death.
4. This power seeks the good of others more than its own, yea, the good of others with the neglect of its own: So *Moses* was not busy to have a most rebellious people *blotted out of the book of life*, but rather desired his own name might be *blotted out of that book*, that (if it had been the will of God) theirs might have been written in. And *Paul* desired that himself

might be separated from Christ, that his brethren and kinsmen, after the flesh, might have been united to him. And if this power seek the good of others after this high rate, even to the neglecting, as it were, and laying aside their own eternal good, how much more to the neglecting and laying aside their temporal good, their worldly profits, advantages and dignities?

5. This power doth not make others suffer, to enlarge the church, but suffers itself to bring this about; So *Christ*, as *Wickliff* saith, "through his poverty, humility, and suffering injury and death, got unto him the children of his kingdom, and not by force;" and the *Martyrs* enlarged the church of Christ by dying themselves, and not by causing others to die; "the blood of the *Martyrs*, being the seed of the church."
6. This power only acts to a spiritual end, salvation, and only according to spiritual laws; but not to any temporal and worldly ends, according to civil and human laws.

And thus you see that this true church power, for the nature and quality of it, both in general, and in particular, differs very much, both from the apprehensions and practice of the most of our ecclesiastical men.

3. What is the extent of this true church-power?

I answer; That this power extends itself full as far as the church, but no farther? For what hath the church to do with those that are not of the church? *What have we to do*, saith *Paul*, *with them that are without?* For church-power, which is spiritual, is no more suitable to the world, than worldly power, which is fleshly, is suitable to the church. The power of the church, which is Christ's power, only reaches so far as Christ's kingdom; that is, the people that are born of God and his Spirtt. True church go-

vernment reaches as far as Christ's and the Spirit's effectual influence and operation, but no farther; that is, to all that are willing, but to none that are unwilling. As nothing hath more troubled the church, than to govern it, and to give it laws after the manner of the world, by secular force and power; so nothing hath more troubled the world, than to govern it, and give it laws, after the manner of the church, by the aforesaid compulsion. Wherefore, as the government of the world is not to be spread over the church; so neither is the government of the church to be spread over the world: but as the world and the church are distinct things, in themselves, so they are to be contented with their distinct governments.

4. What is the outward instrument of this power?

I answer; The word only, which is the only sceptre and sword of Christ's kingdom, to govern his people, and subdue his enemies. Christ himself, the head of the church, used no other instrument to govern his people by, but the word, or the preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and declaring what he had heard from his Father; and at his departure out of the world, he told them, that *as his Father had sent him, so did he send them*, and no otherwise; that is, to do all in the church by the power of the word, and nothing by the power of the world. And so, the true church doth all in itself only by the gospel; by the gospel it bindeth and looseth; by the gospel it remits and retains sin; by the gospel it quickens to life, and wounds to death; by the gospel it receives in, and casts out; by the gospel it works faith, renews the life, acts, orders, guides, and governs all things; and that church that hath another sceptre and sword besides the word, that hath orders and constitutions of men to govern by, and plurality of votes in classical, provincial and national assemblies, to bind and loose by; that have their own laws and orders to be their sceptre, and the authority of the magistrate to be their

sword in their kingdom; I say, if these be the ways and instruments of their governments, assuredly the church they boast of is another church than Christ's, and is no other in very deed, but a kingdom of sin, and darkness, and death; and when its form of godliness, which it hath put on to deceive, shall after a few years vanish away, it shall return into the shape of its first beginning.

And therefore let us know, whatever rules, orders, or human inventions, men do study and devise to govern their churches by, the true church of Christ shall ever be known by the sceptre and sword of the only gospel preached in it, which is fully sufficient for the regiment of the church; else Christ were an imperfect lawgiver: And all those that do affirm, that the votes, determinations, rules, and constitutions of councils, are better for the well ordering and governing the church, than the pure and naked word of the gospel by the ministration of the Spirit, in my judgment they speak blasphemously.

Let us now hear what *Luther* saith to this purpose; "Christians, saith he, (*m*) ought to be governed by that word, and no other, whereby they are made Christians, that is, free from sin; and this is only by the pure gospel of God, without the addition of council, doctors, fathers." For what is it to govern Christians by that word, which though they keep, yet neither do they become Christians, nor continue such? nay, they cease to be Christians, and lose Christ. And of this sort is every word besides the gospel: and salvation reigns in us, not by the laws of men, but by the power of Christ. Farther, they that are not Christians, are to be restrained other ways than by the traditions of men; for these are to be let alone; and

(*m*) Christiani eo verbo, & non alio regi debent. quo Christiani, id est, liberi a peccatis fiunt; hoc est, solo Evangelio Dei puro, sine additionibus Conciliorum, Doctorum, Patrum, &c. *Luther Epist. ad Carol. Ducem Sabaudiæ, tom. 7. f.* 486

as *Paul* saith, We are not to mingle with them. There is the secular sword, there is the magistrate for these, and it belongs to him to restrain those that are evil, from evil deeds, by the power of the sword. But the bishop or overseer, governs Christians without the sword, only by the word of God; seeing it is certain, they are not Christians, except they be spontaneously good; and such they are made by the force of the spirit of faith, as *Paul* saith: *Rom.* viii. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God.* What madness then is it to urge them that are willingly good, with the laws of the evil? And yet, saith he, There are not a few light and vain men, that think that the business of the gospel is to be promoted with weapons and cuffs.

And the same *Luther*, in his epistle to the Christians, and preachers of *Erphurd*, said, "Consider in your mind, with what sword I subdued the papacy, and the whole state of religious men, who before were dreadful to all; of whom it was said, *Who shall fight with the beast, that hath power to make war with the saints, and to overcome them?* And yet, saith he, I never touched them with so much as one of my fingers; but Christ destroyed and overthrew all that detestable kingdom, by discovering their iniquities, by the spirit of his mouth, that is, by the word of the gospel."

In which passages of his (besides what is spoken before) it is apparent, that there is no other instrument of the true church's power, but the word of the gospel, which is the only sceptre and sword of Christ's kingdom.

5. What the true church can do by virtue of this power?

Now the true church, by the power it hath received from Christ, can,

1. Gather itself together, when, and as often as it pleaseth. The company of believers have power to gather themselves together for their mutual good, instruction,

preservation, edification, and for the avoiding or preventing of evil; and that without the consent or authority of any extrinsical and foreign power whatever; else Christ were not a sufficient founder of his church.

And if every free society, not subjected to tyranny, hath power in itself to congregate and come together, as conveniency and necessity shall require: as is evident in all civil corporations, and in all fraternities and meetings of love; much more hath the church of Christ, which is the freest society in the world, power to meet together into a communion of saints, though it be without and against the consent and authority of the powers of the world.

And thus the disciples, immediately after Christ's resurrection, though the people and the rulers were wholly set against them, did often meet together among themselves, though privately; and Christ himself came and stood in the midst of them, and finding them in that way of communion, said, *Peace be unto them:* And so, by his own presence, did both justify and encourage such meetings. And after, the apostles, with other believers, to the number of an hundred and twenty, met together in an upper room to pray, and to choose an apostle in the stead of *Judas:* Acts i. And at the day of Pentecost they all met again: *Acts* ii. Though the elders of the church, and rulers of the state, were utterly against their meetings. And again, *Acts* iv. *Peter* and *John*, after the threatenings of the rulers and Jews, went and met with their own company, which was now mightily increased by the ministry of the gospel, and declared to them all things that God had done by them, and the rulers had done against them; whereupon all of them joined together in the praise of God, for the success of the gospel, against the power of the world. And again, *Acts* vi. the church of its own accord, met together, to choose seven deacons; and a mul-

titude of other instances might be produced. By all which it appears that the church of believers hath power of itself to appoint its own meetings, as conveniency or necessity shall require for the good of the church. And therefore none are to presume to deny the church this power, which it hath received from him, that hath *all power in heaven and in earth:* Neither ought the true church to suffer this power to be taken from them, which they have received from so good a hand; but still to use their own Christian meetings, though the powers of the world never so much oppose them; as the apostles and believers in their time began, and as believers after, for 300 years continued, notwithstanding the barbarous cruelties of the persecuting emperors.

2. As the church of the faithful hath power from Christ to meet together; so secondly, to appoint its own outward orders: For the church, whilst it dwells in flesh and blood, uses some external rites, by which it is neither sanctified in soul or body; but they are things merely of outward order and decency: And these things each church or communion of saints may order by itself, according to the wisdom of the Spirit; so it observes these rules.

1. That they do all things in love, seeing all laws without love are tyranny; and so, whatsoever is not from and for love, is not to be appointed; and if it be, it is again to be abolished; seeing no text of the scripture itself, if it build not up love, is rightly interpreted.
2. They are to do all things for peace, and all outward orders in the church must be to procure, and to preserve peace among the faithful, and not to break it. They are most unhappy and pernicious orders, that do not only offend a few of Christ's lit-

tle ones, (which itself is a sad thing) but do grieve, disquiet and prejudice the peace of the generality of the faithful.

3. They must do all things after the wisdom of the Spirit, and not after the manner of the world: seeing the church (*n*) is not to be ordered according to the manner of the world, but rather against it; as the apostle saith, *Be not conformed to this world.*

4. They must appoint nothing as of necessity: For there is no more pestilent doctrine in the church, than to make those things necessary which are not necessary: For thus the liberty of faith is extinguished, and the consciences of men are ensnared. We doubt not but believers may order any outward things for their own good, so they do not impose them necessarily on any; as if the observing of them were righteousness, and the omission of them sin. And so the church, after all its orders, is to leave indifferent things as it found them; that is, free, and at the liberty of the faithful, to observe or not observe, as they shall see cause, or judge convenient. For all these kind of things are indifferent in their own nature; and God regards no more the manner, and form, and time, and circumstances of spiritual duties, than the manner, and form, &c. of our eating, and drinking, and working, and marrying, and trading; for all which, it is sufficient, if they be done in Christian wisdom and discretion, without being tied necessarily to a set and unchangeable form.

5. They may persuade their orders (if they see cause) by the spirit of love and meekness, but must not

(*n*) Nunquam ecclesia per mundum gubernanda est, et non potius contra morem mundi, eo quod scriptum est, nolite conformari huic seculo? *Jo. Gers. Decl. Viror. Ecclesiast.*

enforce them upon pain of secular punishment, or church censure; as those use to do, that make themselves lords and tyrants in the church. For these outward things the church can order, only for the willing, but not for the unwilling. And so, if some believers shall think good, upon just grounds, to do otherwise in these outward things, than the generality of the church, yet ought the church to be so far from censuring them, that it is to entertain communion with them, notwithstanding any such differences. For when Christians are knit to Christ, by faith, and do receive and walk in his Spirit, all other things are indifferent to them, to do or not to do, to use, or not to use, at their own freedom. And Christ only, being sufficient for all his; whatever is besides Christ, is a perishing thing; and so is so far from being to be imposed, that in itself it is not to be valued.

Now if the church do appoint any outward orders, these rules it is to observe; yea, the spiritual church doth always observe them, and never made rules in itself, upon other terms than are here set down.

But on the contrary, the carnal church, or churches of men, they especially trouble themselves about these outward things; and of these they make laws, and constitutions, yea, sin and righteousness; and by these things they judge the church, and the members of Christ: In such sort, that they that will submit to their rules and impositions, shall be the church of Christ; but they that will not, shall be reckoned heretics and schismatics. And hereby they declare, that they are fallen from the power of godliness, to the form, and from the substance of religion, to the circumstances; inasmuch as they advance empty forms and shadows, in the place of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." And to these we may

say, with *Peter*, *Why tempt ye God, in putting such a yoke upon the disciples and members of Christ* ?

And though this kind of church will, with these things, still be troubling us, and "biting us by the heel," yet in the power and prerogative of the seed of the woman, we will, by degrees, "bruise its head," till at last we break it quite in pieces.

Now one thing more, I shall add, touching the church's power to appoint its own orders, as conceiving it very necessary to be known ; and that is this :

That the true church hath power to appoint these outward orders, not for itself only, but also for its officers (which also are part of itself) and it is not to suffer its officers to frame or impose such on it. For the church is not the officers, but the officers are the church's ; as *Paul* has taught us, saying to the church, *All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.* And so the officers are the church's, and are to be ordered by it in these things, but are not to order it. And if the officers of the church, forgetting that they are servants, shall presume, by themselves, to order outward things for the church, without the church, as now is done ; the church still remains above the officers, and hath power to interpret, change, or wholly take away all those things, as it sees occasion : to wit, so far as they are a stumbling block to the weak, and a grief to the strong, and tend to work division among the faithful. Presumptuous officers are they, and know not where Christ hath set them, who, instead of being ordered by the church, go about to order it, and make themselves the lords of the church, being but the servants of it.

3. *The true church hath power to choose its officers, and if there be cause, to reform them, or depose them.*

The church hath power to choose its own officers. True indeed it is, that as in the natural, so in the spiritual body,

every member is in office; and that the ministry of the New Testament, being the ministration of the Spirit, is common to all that have received the Spirit. Wherefore, if every believer hath received the Spirit to profit withal, and hath power and privilege, as opportunity serves, and necessity requires, to speak the word, that the power and virtue of Christ may be declared through them all: there is no doubt, but any community of Christians may, by a common consent, choose one or more to speak to all, in the name of all. Agreeable to this is that of *Paul:* 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. where he commands *That the office of teaching be committed to faithful men, who are able to teach others.* Where the apostle, contemning all superfluous ceremonies and pomp of ordaining, only seeks, that the ministers may be fit and able to teach, and without any more ado, commits the ministry of the word unto them.

More particularly, in this matter, we shall inquire after these three things.

1. What officers are to be chosen.
2. Out of whom they are to be chosen. And,
3. By whom they are to be chosen.

For the first, What officers are to be chosen. *Paul* teaches us this, saying, *They must be faithful men, apt and able to teach others.* For as among natural men in the world, they that have most natural power and abilities, are fittest to be the officers: so among spiritual men in the church, they are fittest to be the officers that have most spiritual power, that is, such in whom Christ and the Spirit are most manifest; and of this, the faithful of all sorts are judges. Wherefore, no natural parts and abilities; nor human learning and degrees in the schools or universities, nor ecclesiastical ordination or orders, are to be reckoned sufficient to make any man a minister, but only the teaching of God, and gifts received of Christ,

by the Spirit, for the work of the ministry, which the faithful are able to discern and judge of.

2. Out of whom these officers are to be chosen. And that is, out of the flock of Christ, and no where else. Indeed antichrist, bringing in human learning instead of the Spirit, chose his ministers only out of the universities: but the right church chooses them out of the faithful; seeing it reckons no man learned, and so fit to speak in the church, but he that hath *heard and learned from the Father*. Moreover it is plain, that as natural power is founded on a natural gift, and he must needs be a man, that is capable of human power; so supernatural power is founded on a supernatural gift, and he must needs be a believer, that is capable of this spiritual power: And so a man must needs first be of the church, ere he can have any power or office in it. Wherefore, all unbelievers and carnal men are so far from having any power in the true church, that they have no place in it; and are so far from being officers, that they are not members: For they that neither have, nor know spiritual power themselves, how can they exercise it among others?

3. By whom they are to be chosen. And that is, by the congregation, or community of believers; For, if every free society hath power to choose its own officers, much more hath the true church this power; being (as is said) the freest society under heaven. And so the true church is not to have officers thrust over them by others, but is to choose them itself.

Object. If any object against this, that *Paul* commanded *Timothy* and *Titus*, to appoint elders; and that *Paul* and *Barnabas*, Acts xiv. 23. *did choose elders in every church with prayer and fasting*. And therefore it may seem, that the congregation hath not power to choose its own ministers, but that some chief ministers must appoint other ministers in each congregation.

Answ. To this I answer: That if there were any ministers among us, that did hold the place of the apostles, living and acting evidently in the virtues of Christ, and in the knowledge and power of the Spirit, I would not doubt to allow them as much authority in ordaining ministers, as *Paul* and *Barnabas*, or any of the other apostles had: But since it is very evident, that very few of these have *the Spirit of the Lord upon them;* how should they have authority to appoint ministers, who cannot themselves be reckoned believers, or spiritual?

But secondly, if they were true ministers, through the anointing of the Spirit, yet could they not appoint ministers in other congregations, without their own consent and approbation: but those whom the whole church chooses, they are to commend to God by prayer; and if they should refuse to do this, yet he who is chosen by the church is sufficiently its minister, through the church's choice alone. Neither did *Paul*, or *Barnabas*, or *Timothy*, or *Titus*, appoint any minister by their own single authority, without the consent of the church; as may appear by those scriptures, 1 *Tim.* iii. and *Titus* i. where *Paul* saith, *The overseers* or elders, as also the deacons or ministers, should be blameless and unreproveable. Now neither *Timothy* nor *Titus* knew of themselves who were blameless in those places, but only received the testimony of the church, who chose them to that office.

Further we see, *Acts* vi. that the twelve apostles together, did not by themselves, appoint any to a lower office, to wit, to be deacons, without the church's own choice of them: But say the twelve to the multitude of the disciples, *Look ye out among yourselves, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* And those whom the church chose the apostles confirmed. Wherefore, if it were not lawful for the apostles, at their own pleasure, to appoint men to minister

so much as alms to the necessities of the poor, without the choice and consent of the church; much less was it lawful for them to appoint any among believers, to the hard and difficult work of the ministry, without their own choice and approbation. By all which it is clear, that the congregation of the faithful have power in themselves, according to the doctrine of the gospel, to choose their own ministers.

And therefore, seeing the true church of God cannot possibly be without the word, seeing it is born, and nourished, and increased, and strengthened, and preserved, and comforted, and perfected by it: And seeing the generality of the clergy of these times are ignorant of the mystery of the gospel, and destitute of the Spirit; it must come to pass, that either the church must perish for want of the word, or else (according to what we have heard) believers must meet together, as they can conveniently, up and down the kingdom; and at such meetings, must choose one or more fit persons from among themselves, to be their elders in the Lord; and then, by prayer, to commend them to the work of the ministry, and so to acknowledge them for their Pastors. And there is no doubt but what believers, met together in the name of Christ, do in this matter, it is done through the working and approving of God himself. And besides this way, I see no other, how (in this great defection of the clergy) the church may have the true word of God restored to their meetings and assemblies again. Now this thing that is so directly cross to the way and working of antichrist, for many ages together, and is so opposite to fathers, schoolmen, councils, doctors, antiquity, custom, and the general practice of the kingdom, cannot be hoped to be accomplished at once, but by degrees, as the lightnings of the gospel shall enlighten the world, and the Spirit

shall be poured forth. And therefore in this matter, let some begin, and the rest follow, as this practice shall be cleared up to them from the scriptures. For none are to be forced in this matter, (if authority should entertain this truth) but the Spirit is to be allowed its own liberty, to blow, when and where, and on whom he listeth. Neither ought this to trouble any, if all do not presently agree with them; it is sufficient, if at first a few begin, whom others may follow afterwards, as God shall persuade them.

Now as the church hath power to choose its officers: so if they prove evil, it hath power, either,

1. To reform them. Or,

2. To depose them.

1. It hath power to reform them, if so be that they may be brought to repentance and amendment: Yea, as all the evils of the church do commonly first flow from the officers, so the reformation of it is first to begin with them. And who shall reform the officers of the church, but the church itself? seeing the officers will be sure to tolerate one another in their un-gospel and un-christian courses, against the life of Christ, and true practice of the word, because it is their own case. Wherefore, seeing the generality of the present clergy are arrived to this height of evil, that they will not be contented to be servants, but will needs make themselves lords over Christ's flock, plotting and striving to pocure and maintain their ecclesiastical state by secular power; seeing they have left off to preach Christ, and the gospel, and only preach of state-affairs, raiiing against the most just and necessary proceedings of the supreme authority of the kingdom, as not suitable to their designs; seeing they are daily depraving the sayings and writings of men more righteous than themselves; yea, and dare cast a veil of their false exposi-

tions over the very scriptures, to darken them, and make them as sackcloth to the world, that the glory of the Father, and the mind of Christ, might (if it were possible) be wholly obscured; yea, seeing they are become so vile, that they had rather Christ himself, with his gospel, and true church, should all perish, than that they should suffer the least diminution of their power, dignity, riches, dominion and tyranny (*o*): What remains, but that the societies of Christians should meet together to reform these evil officers? And whereas they are now met to reform the church, it is far more necessary and would be far more profitable for the congregations of the faithful, to meet together to reform them, if yet they be capable of reformation; which I confess is much to be doubted, seeing they sin against so clear a light.

2. If the officers of the church prove incorrigible, the church hath power to depose them, seeing they have no indelible character, whatever the *Romish* church affirms. Wherefore, as the true church hath power to choose its ministers, and to continue them as long as they remain faithful in their work; so also it hath power to remove them, if they forsake the truth and power of the gospel. For as in civil societies, not subjected to tyranny, officers that prove evil are moveable by them that made them; so likewise the church hath power to remove, if it see cause, this spiritual officer; yea, the spiritual officer is so much the more moveable than the civil, by how much the more he is intolerable, if he be unfaithful: for the civil officer can only hurt in the things of this life, but the spiritual in the things of eternal life. Wherefore, the

(*o*) Hi perfecto non venient in concilium, ut judicentur ab aliis ut emendent ea quæ ipsorum & conscientia, adeoque totus mundus emendanda esse clamat, sed omnes alios judicare & subjugare; suam illam potentiam retinere; & quicquid ipsorum obstat libidini, conculcare, e medio tollere conabuntur. *Bullinger. Ep. ad Edvard. sext.*

church hath the greatest necessity to remove him, and choose another; seeing this salt, when it hath lost its savour, is good for nothing but to be cast upon the dunghill. And to this, worthy Mr. *Tindal*, a blessed martyr, witnesses, saying, "If they, [that is, the ministers] err from the word, then may whosoever God moveth in his heart, play *Paul*, and correct him; and if he will not obey the scripture then have his brethren authority by the scripture to put him down, and send him out of Christ's church, among the heretics, which prefer their false doctrines above the true word of Christ." *(p)*

4. *The true church hath power to call its councils.*

If the church of the faithful stand in need of a council, it may call one, if it pleaseth, and it hath power so to do: and the council is not to call and appoint the church, as is now done, but the church is to call and appoint the council; and the council is to have its authority from the church, and not the church from it. And for the world, it can no more call the councils of the church, than the church can call the councils of the world; the councils of the church and the world, being as distinct as the church and the world themselves are.

Now I said, The church, if it need a council, may call one; because the church of believers now seldom needs a council, seeing all things are so clear in the word of God, with which the faithful are so well acquainted.

There are many other causes why the right church may very well be without councils; As,

1. Because councils, as the manner was, were either called or congregated by the pope, a mere usurper in the church; or by secular and worldly princes, who advanced themselves to the same power in the church, though upon another account. And according to

(p) Tindal's practice of popish prelates, p. 344.

their ends and designs, councils, for the most part, have been guided and pointed.

2. Because they have, for the most part, been made up of bishops and ecclesiastical men, who have only sought the interest and advantage of the clergy, to the prejudice of the body of Christianity; by which means they have set up their own kingdom and tyranny over all other Christians.
3. Because, being gathered and met, they have especially meddled with outward rites and ceremonies; and touching these, have made binding and coercive laws, to the overthrow of Christian liberty, and the ensnaring and enslaving men's consciences.
4. Because, if they have meddled with doctrine, they have rather perverted and obscured the clear word of the gospel, than truly explicated and unfolded it.
5. Wherein they have done well, yet this evil hath always gone along with it, that they have made people rather look to men than unto God, and that in the very things of God; and to take divine things from them, by a human faith, rather than from God himself, and his immediate word, according to the faith of God's elect: and so have given forth themselves in their opinions and judgments, as a foundation to the church in the stead of Jesus Christ.
6. Because they always determine the things of God by the plurality of votes, and do not weigh, but number the suffrages, and so the greater part still overcomes the better; and the many that are called, carry the vote against the few that are chosen; whereby it comes to pass, that the truth is subdued, and error is established, by a plausible authority.
7. Because such councils commonly attribute to themselves infallibility; and so set themselves up as a peremptory rule, by which the whole church must

walk, and none must presume to say to them, *cur ita facitis*? why do ye so? though they do never so ill. They say, they cannot be judged by any other Christians, because they are subject to none; but all other Christians are subject to them, and are to be judged by them: They say, they may pronounce all other schismatics, and heretics, but no body must pronounce them so, though they be so. And after they have once drunk of this cup of abomination, what hope can there be, that any thing hereafter should be done right among them?

8. And lastly, because, after so many councils, things have not been the better, but the worse in the church, through their means: for it is not dead laws and orders, written by men, will do the true church any good; but the living law of God, written in their hearts by the Spirit, as God hath promised to do; saying, *I will write my law in their hearts, and put it in their inward parts.* For as the law of sin hath been written in our natures, to corrupt us; so the law of the Spirit of life must be written also in our natures to reform us. Wherefore, after all their decrees, laws, rules, orders, &c. the church commonly hath been so far from being bettered, that it hath become more ignorant of the word, superstitious, formal and profane, than before (*q*)

All these things being seriously considered, the church may very well want councils.

(*n*) Nam quid expectemus ex generalium conciliorum determinationibus, docent nos proxima aliquot seculorum exempla, jam inde ab annis quadragintis aut amplius. Quo enim crebriora coiere concilia, tanto magis invaluit superstitio, & error in doctrina, abusus in ritibus, superbia, luxuries, avaritia, omnisque corruptio in docentibus, vel sacerdotibus, denique fœdisciplinæ obliteratio. *Bulling. Epist. ad Edvard. sextum.*

Now, if any shall say, yea, but had not the church a council in the apostles times? as we see *Acts* xv. and did not they order and decree matters in the church?

I answer, the church had a council then, but far differing from the councils now a days; for,

1. That council was not called, nor packed together by secular power, but freely met together, by the general consent of the church of the faithful: For by the believers at *Antioch*, it was agreed, that *Paul* and *Barnabas* should go to the apostles and elders at *Jerusalem*, about the matters in controversy.
2. This council did not consist only of the apostles and elders, but of the brethren also, and whole church; and the whole church, as well as the apostles and elders, did agree and order what was done in that matter.
3. That free council, consisting of the apostles, elders, and brethren, did not determine any thing by their mere power and authority, but debated the business by the word, and by the word concluded it: And so it was not the authority of the council that did any thing, but the authority of the word, that did all in that matter; as you may see in the fore-named place. And in these respects that council differs from ours.

Now if, notwithstanding all this, the church, upon some occasions, desire a council (for herein, as in all other outward things, it is free) it must mind these things.

1. That it hath power itself to call one, as the primitive church had. And what men can object against this, of worldly princes calling them; let them not say, what they did, but what they ought to have done.
2. As the church itself is to choose its council, so it is to choose it out of itself; for the councils of the church are to be chosen out of the church, and not

of the world; out of the faithful, and not out of unbelievers. For "the natural man, that neither knows nor savours the things that be of God," can be of no use here; but he must be able to know the word of God from the doctrines of men, and to separate the precious from the vile, that is employed in this matter. And so the natural, carnal, and literal man must be declined here, where the things are wholly spiritual and divine; and the spiritual man only, who speaks spiritual things by a spiritual rule, must be heard and regarded; and so a man must first be of the church, ere he can be of the council.

3. As the church is to choose men out of itself, for its council, so likewise it is to choose brethren, as well as elders; and ecclesiastical men are not to meddle alone in the matters of the church, and to thrust out other Christians, as if they were necessarily to be concluded in, and by them.
4. In choosing elders and brethren to this work, great care is to be had, that they choose not men of worldly power or place, lest worldly power, and authority, and honour, might seem to bear sway in the things of the kingdom of God: but they are rather to make choice of men destitute of these things, that it may appear, whatever they do, is done only by the clear evidence of the word, and influence of the Spirit, and so only by the law of love, all secular power and force being excluded. (*r*)

(*r*) Ex ejusmodi cœtu, *i. e.* fidelium, deligendi erunt homines ad concilium; hoc vero esset pulcherrimum concilium, quod ab ipso Spiritu Sancto regeretur. In hanc sententium & Lyra scriptum reliquit, Ecclesiam non æstimandam esse ex summis illis, aut spiritualibus ordinibus, sed ex vere credentius. *Luther. Libel. de notis veræ Eccles. tom. 7. f.* 152.

5. *The church hath power to judge of all doctrines, and that both of its officers and councils.*

1. The clergy, and ecclesiastical men, have been wont to challenge to themselves the knowledge and judgment of doctrines, and have excluded ordinary Christians from it; whereas, in truth, the judgment of doctrine belongeth to the people, and not to the ministers. And all Christ's sheep have power to judge of the doctrine the ministers teach, whether it be Christ's voice, or a stranger's, *John* x. and Christ commanded them to *take heed of false prophets, which come to them in sheep's clothing, being inwardly ravening wolves*, Matt. vii. And the apostle commands them, *to try the spirits, whether they be of God:* and hath said, *Let one or two speak, and the rest judge*, 1 Cor. xiv. &c. by which, with many other scriptures, it is evident, That ministers are not to judge of doctrine for the people; but the people are to judge of the doctrine of the ministers, and according as they find it to be of God, or not of God to receive it, or reject it. For every one is to be saved by his own faith, and not by another man's; and so is to take heed how he hears the things of faith, at his own peril; and he is not (if he will be wise unto salvation) to take up things on trust, in a manner that concerns either his eternal life, or eternal death.

2. As the church is to judge of the doctrine of its officers, so also of its councils: For the church judges of them and their doctrine also by the word; and doth not take all that they determine for truth, to be certain and unquestionable: Yea, in the first council of the apostles, *Acts* xv. other churches and Christians had both liberty and power, to try both the doctrine and spirit of the very apostles in that matter; and were not to swallow it down whole, as they say, because the apostles had determined it, and they were holy men; but the faithful were to judge, whether or no they had judged according to the

word, and if not, they might have resisted them, as *Paul* did *Peter*. And *Paul* gives this liberty to Christians; yea, we have it from Christ himself, whether *Paul* had allowed it or no, to try the very apostles themselves, and the very angels of heaven, whether they bring the right word or no: for Christ commanded the apostles to teach the nations, *to observe and do whatsoever he had commanded them*, and nothing else; and saith *Paul*, *If I, or an angel from heaven, bring you any other doctrine, let him be accursed.* So that the church hath power to examine, try, and judge, the doctrine of the apostles and angels, much more of other men, who have not received such an anointing, neither do live in so clear a light of God.

And thus I have declared the things which seemed to me both convenient and necessary for the true church to know, for the preserving of that peace among themselves, which they have in Christ.

Now as the judgment of the church is to be rectified in these things, so the practice of it is to be rectified in other things, for the preserving it in peace.

The things wherein the practice of the church is to be rectified in the way of peace, are either,

1. More absolute and general, or,
2. More special and occasional, in case of difference among the faithful.

Among the things that are more absolute and general, which are to be done, to procure and preserve the peace of the church: these nine things, that follow, have not the least place.

1. *Practical rule for peace.*

1. The true church is to preserve itself distinct from the world: and is neither to mingle itself with the world, nor to suffer the world to mingle itself with it. For if the church and the world be mingled together in one society, the same common laws will no more agree to them, who

are of such different natures, principles and ends, than the same common laws will agree to light and darkness, life and death, sin and righteousness, flesh and spirit.

For the true church are a spiritual people, being born of God, and so they worship God in the spirit, according to the law of the Spirit of life, that was in Christ, and is in them: but the carnal church is of the world, and only savours of the world, and so will have a worldly religion, forms, orders, government, and all worldly as itself is. Now whilst these two are mingled together, what peace can there be? for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and light with darkness, and Christ with the devil? And so, what agreement have believers with unbelievers, or the true church with the world? Wherefore it is not the way of peace, to mingle the church and the world, but to separate them, and to keep them distinct; that those that are of one nature and spirit, may be of one communion among themselves: and this way of peace God himself teacheth us by *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 17. saying, *Come out from among them, my people, and be ye separate:* for to separate the church from the world, in its communion of saints, is the only way to preserve peace in both; seeing the church will best agree with itself, and the world with itself.

The second rule.

2. The church being thus distinct from the world, is to be contented with its own power for its own affairs; and is not to introduce or entertain any power in it, that is not of it. Wherefore, the true church, being such a kingdom, as is not of this world, stands in need of no worldly power; and being a spiritual and heavenly kingdom, is only to have and exercise a spiritual and heavenly power; seeing this power alone, and by itself, is able to accomplish the whole good pleasure of God in the church, and to work all the works in it that God hath to do.

And so, it is strongly to be suspected, that those men that dare not commit the success of their business to Christ's power alone, but will call in secular power, over and above, to help them: I say, it is more than probable, that they have underneath, some secular end, seeing Christ's power alone is fully sufficient to do all things that are necessary and profitable for his kingdom.

Besides, this wordly power never works peace, but always disturbances in the church; putting all things out of God's way and method, into man's, and working man's will rather than God's; yea, man's will against God's: and it is wholly contrary to the very nature of the church; and how then can it agree with it in any thing?

If any shall reply, that worldly power doth well in the church, because it keeps down many profane persons that would not be kept down by the word.

I answer; That so far as such profane ones are governed by wordly power, they are of the world, and not of the church; and worldly power had better govern them in the world, its own proper sphere, than in the church, which is beyond their line; especially, seeing the church hath power enough in itself, to govern those that are of it; and they that will not be governed willingly in the church, as Christians, let them be governed against their wills, in the commonwealth, as men. For the government of the church is over men, as Christians, as spiritual; but the government of the state is over men, as men, as natural and carnal. The first of these governments belong to Christ, and the latter to the magistrate; and if the magistrate be faithful in his office and headship, there is no doubt to be made of Christ's faithfulness in his. But now, if the magistrate will not content himself with his own kingdom and power, but will needs intrude on Christ's also; and not reckoning it enough to govern men, as men, by his worldly power, will also by the same power, be

tampering with the very church: this both renders him troublesome to the faithful, and the faithful to him: Him troublesome to the faithful, in that he uses a power over them, that is neither suitable to them, nor their affairs; and them troublesome to him, because in God's kingdom, as they hear not the voice, so neither do they obey the command of a stranger.

The pope, he arrogates both swords to himself, when neither belongs to him, and therefore, in due time, shall perish by both; and if the magistrate shall assume to himself the power of both kingdoms, Christ's and the world's, when of right but one belongs to him, to wit, the world's, and not Christ's; it will be very dangerous, lest by encroaching on Christ's kingdom, he lose his own.

Let the magistrate therefore use his power in the state, and let him suffer Christ to use his power in the church, seeing his presence is always there; and then there will be quietness in both, but else in neither; seeing Christ will as assuredly trouble the magistrate's kingdom, as the magistrate troubles his.

The third rule, is,

Not to bring or force men into the church against their wills. The kingdoms of the world are unquiet, because many that are unwilling, are under those regiments; but Christ's kingdom is therefore quiet, because all the people in it are willing; and none of them are forced in, but all are persuaded in, as it is written, *God persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem:* That is, the gentiles were to be persuaded, and not forced into the church. And so Christ commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations, and not to offer them outward violence; and to persuade peace, but not to threaten or enforce it. "For such is the nature of the church, that inward persuasion is required no where more than here. For none may be com-

pelled to the faith against their wills, and God will be loved with the whole heart; and also hypocrisy is a sin chiefly hated of God. Whereby it comes to pass, that the whole manner of governing the church must have this scope, that they that are persuaded, may be first called into it, and after kept in it, upon the same account. And so, the more this manner shall be free from dominion, so much the more fit is it to govern, increase and confirm the church (*s*)." And this way only was used as long as the apostles lived, and those that succeeded them in the same spirit; and that unquestionably for 300 years after: Yea, and when the church came to be countenanced by worldly authority, yet this same freedom still was allowed; of which I shall produce a few testimonies.

I read, that *Constantine*, the emperor, would have no man enforced to be of one religion more than another.

Also the same *Constantine*, in his epistle to his subjects inhabiting the *east*, saith, "Let no man be grievous one to another: but what every man thinketh BEST, that let him DO. For such as are wise, ought thoroughly to be persuaded, that they only mean to live holily, as they should do, whom the Spirit of God moveth to take their delight and recreation in reading his holy will; and if others wilfully will go out of the way, cleaving to the synagogues of false doctrine, they may at their own peril. As for us, we have the worthy house or congrega-

(*s*) Ea est ecclesiæ natura, ut nusquam magis requiratur interna persuasio. Nam & ad fidem nemo cogi potest invitus, & Deus toto se corde vult amari, & denique hypocrisis peccatum est imprimis Deo exosum. Quo fit, ut tota ecclesiæ gubernandæ ratio, hunc scopum habere, ut in ecclesiam vocentur plurimi persuasi, & in ecclesia continentur non alia ratione. Itaque quo magis ea ratio aberit ab imperio, hoc magis est apta, regendæ, augendæ & confirmandæ ecclesiæ. *Chamer. de Oecumen. Pontific.*

tion of God's verity, which he, according to his own goodness and nature, hath given us. And this also we wish to them, that with like participation and common consent, they may feel with us the same delectation of mind. And after, let no man hurt, or be prejudicial to his neighbour, in that wherein he thinketh himself to have done well. If by that which any man knoweth, or hath experience of, he thinketh he may profit his neighbour, let him do the same; if not, let him give over, and remit it till another time. For there is a great diversity between the willing and voluntary embracing of religion, and that whereunto a man is forced and constrained (*t*)."

I read also that *Ethelbert* king of *Kent*, "Being converted to the faith, *anno* 586, after his conversion, innumerable others daily did come in, and were converted to the faith of Christ, whom the king did especially embrace, but COMPELLED NONE; for so he had learned, THAT THE FAITH AND SERVICE OF CHRIST OUGHT TO BE VOLUNTARY, AND NOT COACTED (*u*)."

The church then, at first, consisted only of the willing, and such as were persuaded unto it by the word, till antichrist began to prevail, and then they fell from persuading to forcing; and they no longer went about to make men willing by the word, but to get power from the kings of the earth, to force them against their wills. And this main piece of the mystery of iniquity, was perfectly

(*t*) Secundum hanc itaque nostrum voluntatem, sano ac rectissimo judicio decrevimus, nemini prorsus denegandum esse potestatem, christianam observantiam vel religionem eligendi ac sequendi; sed unicuique dandam esse hanc facultatem, ut animum suum illi religioni addicat, quam ipse sibi competere putat, quo nobis Deus consuetam in omnibus diligentiam & probitatem præstet. *Euseb. l.* 10. *c.* 5. *Fox. vol.* 1. *p.* 131.

(*u*) Fox, vol. 1. p. 150.

brought forth by *Boniface* the third, who was the first that used these words in the church, *Volumus, mandamus statuimus, ac præcipimus*, " We will, we require, we appoint, we command :" which is not the voice of the true ministers of Christ, but the true voice of thieves and murderers. And from that time the peace of the church decayed apace, when there were more unwilling forced unto it, than willing persuaded. And true peace will never be restored to it again, till men shall abandon the power of force, and only use the persuasion of the word, that the church may consist only of a willing people.

The fourth rule, is,

To make void the distinction of clergy and laity among Christians: For the clergy, or ecclesiastical men, have all along, under the reign of antichrist, distinguished themselves from other Christians, whom they called the laity; and have made up a distinct, or several kingdom among themselves; and separated themselves from the lay in all things; and called themselves by the name of the CHURCH; and reckoned other Christians but as common and unclean, in respect of themselves. Whereas, in the true church of Christ, there are no distinctions, nor sects, nor difference of persons; no clergy or laity; no ecclesiastical, or temporal; but they are all, as *Peter* describes them, 1 *Pet.* ii. 9. *A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to shew forth the virtues of him that called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.* And so all Christians, through the baptism of the Spirit, are made priests alike unto God; and every one hath right and power alike to speak the word; and so there is among them no clergy or laity; but the ministers are such who are chosen by Christians, from among themselves, to speak the word to all, in the name and right of all; and they have no right nor authority at all to this office, but by the consent of the

church. And so presbyters and bishops, or (which is all one) elders and overseers in the church, differ nothing from other Christians, but only in the office of the word, which is committed to them by the church; as an alderman or common council man in the city, differs nothing from the rest of the citizens, but only in their office, which they have not of themselves neither, but by the city's choice; or as the speaker in the house of commons, differs nothing from the rest of the commons, but only in his office, which he hath also by the choice of the house; and thus, and no otherwise, doth a minister differ from other Christians, as *Paul* saith, *Let a man so esteem of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God.*

But antichrist, he hath cast out the simplicity of Christian people, and brought sects into the church, dividing it into clergy and laity; and this distinction they have made visible by their garments, disguising their clergy in their habit from other Christians, that they may appear holier than they, and of another order from them. And this distinction hath proved a seminary of implacable discord, and heart-burning in the church: For hereupon the clergy have preferred themselves above other Christians, and have exercised authority and coercive power and domination, and very tyranny over them; and have made themselves their lords, and given them laws, rules, forms, orders, after their own minds, and agreeable to their own advantages, and would not so much as suffer them to judge whether they were agreeable to the word of God or not; as if other Christians were their subjects, slaves, vassals, yea, very dogs. And hence again, the laity (as they called them) have envied and maligned them, and hated and opposed them; and as they could get power, have been subduing them; and have looked upon them as men of a different sect and interest from themselves, whose prosperity was their ruin, and whose power was their inslav-

ing: and all this was to the making void Christian brotherhood and communion. Wherefore the right church, to preserve in it the peace of Christ, must admit of no such distinction of laity and clergy, but all Christians must equally remain in it, kings, priests, and prophets unto God.

The fifth rule, is,

To keep equality in the church, and that both between Christians and churches: for this also is an excellent way to preserve peace.

1. To keep equality between Christians. For though, according to our first nativity, whereby we are born of men, there is great inequality, some being born high, some low, some honourable, some mean, some kings, some subjects, &c. yet, according to our new or second birth, whereby we are born of God, there is exact equality; for here are none better or worse, higher or lower; but all have the same faith, hope, love; the same God, Christ, Spirit, the same divine nature; the same precious promises; the same incurruptible crown, and inheritance of saints in light. And therefore saith *Paul*, speaking of this true church, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; but all are one in Christ Jesus:* Gal. iii. 28. Indeed, in the world, and before men (I say again) there is distinction of persons, and inequality; but in Christ's kingdom, and before God, all believers are equal: and this equality preserves peace. But when, in this kingdom, some men will be advancing themselves above others, like *Diotrephes*, that would have the pre-eminence; and some will be striving to sit at the right hand, and some at the left, whilst they leave others to sit at the footstool; this is that which bred the difference among the very disciples, who envied *Zebedee's* children for such a desire. And therefore, Christ, to preserve peace, forbade lordship in his church, and commanded service; and tells them, that

the nature of his kingdom is, not to place men one over another, but one under another, and that the greatest must be the least; the greatest in the way of the Spirit, must be the least in the way of the flesh.

2. As equality among Christians is to be kept for the preserving of peace, so also among churches: For all churches are equal, as well as all Christians; and there is no church can set itself before, or above another; all being sisters of one mother; beams of one sun; branches of one vine: streams of one fountain; members of one body; branches of one golden candlestick; and so all equal in all things. Wherefore there may, and ought to be, a consociation of churches, but no subordination, which makes void at once, both equality and unity. And so that church, or those churches, that will set themselves above other churches that are their equals; as the classical above the congregational, &c. they are the breakers of Christian peace and unity; and the unskilful vote of the assembly, for the subordination of churches, was not a way to make peace, but to mar peace in the church of God.

Moreover, no church can be subjected to another, but Christ, who is present in it, and is king and lawgiver, is subjected too; which no true church will either require or allow. For if the true church will not subject the word of God, which they have received, to any men or angels, but will judge all by it, and will suffer none to judge it; much less will they subject Christ, the Lord of all, to any other power or authority; for so they should dishonour and disannul their head. Where two or three are met in Christ's name, Christ himself is among them, and the head of them; and so they can submit to no body else, seeing Christ hath made no greater, nor surer promise of his presence, to any body than to them.

The sixth rule, is,

To keep the officers of the church in subordination to the whole church or community, and not to suffer them to get head over it; seeing the very nature of ruling the church, is not dominion, but service. We read, *Acts* xi. 2. that when *Peter* had preached in the house of *Cornelius*, a gentile or heathen, the church of the circumcision, to whom *Peter* was minister, contended with him, that he went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them, (for as yet they knew not that the Gentiles were to be called;) and *Peter* was fain to give an account to them of the whole matter, and to shew them, that he was warned of God in a vision to do so, &c. And this was a sign that *Peter* was a servant of the church, and in subordination to it, and no lord over it. And after, *ver.* 22. when the church at *Jerusalem* heard that the *Grecians* at *Antioch* had received the gospel, they sent *Barnabas* to *Antioch*, to forward and perfect the work. And also, the church at *Antioch* sent forth *Paul* and *Barnabas* to the work of the ministry, in divers towns and countries. All which are an evident sign that the church was above the officers, and not the officers above the church.

Now this also will preserve peace in the church, to keep the officers in their proper place, and to let them remain as servants in the church, which Christ hath commanded; and not to let them grow up to be lords and masters, which (Christ knowing the evil and inconvenience thereof) hath forbidden. For if the officers get above the church, though they be never so good, they are masterful and troublesome; and though never so bad, yet will they get a party in the church for themselves, and so work disturbance; but if the church remains, as it

ought, above the officers, it quits them when they grow evil and unruly, and chooses better in their stead, and so preserves union. Whereas, fixed and unmoveable officers, when they do degenerate, are the causes of all disturbances and confusions, both in church and state.

The seventh rule, is,

For all true Christians and congregations to take Christ alike for their head, and not to set up visible heads, or ringleaders to themselves of men; no, not of the best of men. For whilst some said, we are of *Paul;* others, we of *Apollos;* others, we of *Cephas;* they were all in this matter carnal, and divided both from Christ, and among themselves; whilst several set up several heads, whom they especially owned, and after whom they were called. Whereas, each that believed by the ministry of *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, were, through the same faith and spirit with them, as near to Christ as themselves were; and so were not to set up a fellow member as a head, to the division of the body. I say, each believer and communion of saints hath Christ equally for their head, and so ought not to set up any outward or visible head for them to join to; for this is to rend the body in pieces, and to work great division and distraction among the faithful.

And therefore I conceive it is a mistake among some brethren, to call the congregations of Christ by the names of men, though godly and eminent; and to say, Mr. such a one's church, or Mr. such a one's church; and so to put the church under several heads, which works distinction and division; whereas they should rather say, the church of Christ in such or such a place; it being, wherever it is, one church, under one head and governor, Jesus Christ.

And therefore let us know, that it is a part of the mystery of iniquity, for the church, or faithful, to have one or more visible heads to go to, not being contented with

Christ alone. And though this hath been, and will be the practice of the carnal church; yet the spiritual church and people do only own, and have recourse to Christ, their true and spiritual head. And so they all, living as one body, and members one of another, under one holy head, live all in invincible peace and unity; whereas difference of outward heads and ringleaders, always breeds difference and divisions among Christians.

The eighth rule, is,

For the true church to keep out all error in doctrine; seeing it breeds, not only division, but confusion and ruin also in the church. Wherefore, the congregations of Christ must be the more careful and watchful in this matter. When some false apostles taught at *Antioch*, that *Except Christians were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved;* which was a most dangerous error against Christ and the gospel; the whole church, first at *Antioch*, and presently after at *Jerusalem*, met together to keep it out; which accordingly, through God, they did. So that whatever doctrines are evidently against the word of truth, and gospel of our salvation, the church is to take care to keep them out, as it loves its own peace and unity.

Now if any say, By what means may the church be able to keep out error?

I answer, It may certainly keep out error by these means.

1. Let the church suffer none to teach among them, that are not themselves taught of God; though they have never so great natural parts, and never so much human learning. For, when they are the teachers that are taught of God, they will only teach the truth, which they have heard and learned from God: And the line of every man's teaching must extend no further. But when they teach that are not so taught, they will, in many things,

vary from the truth as it is in Jesus; yea, and under a form of sound doctrine, will give forth an unsound and false sense, to the deceiving of many that are weak and simple; and so, under the pretence of Christ, will utter the voice of a stranger, and endanger the mis-leading of some sheep for a time.

2. Let the faithful examine every thing that is taught by the word of God, and not receive doctrines upon trust from their teachers, who, through the reputation of their learning and holiness, may easily lead them unawares into error. And therefore, let the church compare the present doctrine, preached and printed, and generally received, with the doctrines of the prophets and apostles, which, without doubt, is sure and certain, seeing those *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit:* And whatever doctrine shall be found contrary to, or different from that doctrine, let them reject it as reprobate silver; seeing the church is to be built upon no other foundation of doctrine, than that of the prophets and apostles. And though, through God's especial goodness, the doctrine of the gospel be again revived among us at this present time, yet ought we not to sit down content with the present state of things; but to search and see if our present doctrine do not yet err from the primitive purity and brightness of the gospel, and that in many considerable points; and whether some, or many corruptions do not yet remain among us to be purged out, by the light and truth of the apostles doctrine.

Wherefore, to conclude this thing, let us know that the church cannot possibly keep out error, longer than it precisely keeps itself to the bare and naked word of God, and tries all doctrines of their teachers by it.

3. The church, that it may be able to keep out errors, must desire of God the Spirit which he hath promised; that this Spirit of truth may lead them into the true and spiritual

knowledge of the word, and understanding of the mind of Christ. For no man can make any right judgment of the word he hears or reads, without the teaching of the Spirit. And by this anointing, as we shall be certainly taught which is truth, so also shall we discern which is error, and that by so clear and true a light, that we shall not mistake. Wherefore, Christians must take heed, that they do not think, with carnal people, that the ability to judge of divine truths and human and antichristian errors, depends upon human learning, arts and sciences; for thus it will come to pass, that they, judging themselves unable to judge of matters of religion, will wholly leave the judgment of them to those whom they conceive after this manner learned: whereby they leave open a wide door through which the teachers may bring in all sorts of errors upon them. But believers must know, that the gift of the Spirit only, without all human learning, is sufficient to teach us perfectly which is truth and which error; and to make us able to judge of all doctrines of men and angels; and that all the human learning in the world, without the Spirit, is not able to do this. And so a poor, plain countryman, by the Spirit, which he hath received, is better able to judge of truth and error, touching the things of God, than the greatest philosopher, scholar, or doctor in the world, that is destitute of it.

4. Another notable means to keep error out of the church, is to restore in it that most ancient gospel-ordinance of prophesying; which, how much soever it hath been out of use during the reign of antichrist, yet is no other than the very commandment of the Lord, as *Paul* witnesseth, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 31. where he saith, *When the whole church is met together, you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted;* and adds, *ver.* 37. *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things I write unto you*

are the commandments of the Lord. Wherefore, brethren, labour that ye may prophesy. So that prophesying in the church, is God's own commandment, as every prophet and spiritual man must acknowledge.

Now this divine ordinance of prophesying, is three ways helpful to keep out error.

1. For first, When one man only speaks in the church, and no man is suffered to speak besides him, as he is very subject to be puffed up, and to conceit that "wisdom only dwells with him;" so he is more ready to vent the thoughts of his own heart, and to speak the dreams and visions of his own head. But when he knows the word of God is not come to him only, but to others also, and that they have wisdom and spirit to speak in the church as well as he, this will both keep down his pride, and make him careful what he speaks, when he knows there are those present in the congregation, that are able to reprove his darkness by light. And this prophesying, is a strong bit and bridle in the jaws of error, that it cannot run that race in the church it doth desire.

2. When one man only speaks, and the doctrine he preaches proves to be erroneous, as it is ordinarily in the common ministry of the kingdom, it comes to pass, that error is not only preached, but goes away uncontroled, and no way is left for the restraining error proportionable to that of propagating it; no body being permitted to speak, to keep the people from the poison of it. And thus, whilst the liberty of public speaking is permitted only to one man in a congregation, and to one sort of men in the kingdom, any error may suddenly be spread over the whole kingdom (as we see by daily experience) without any sufficient and proportionable remedy to prevent it.

But now, when the right or power of prophesying is allowed to the whole church, the minister can no sooner

vent any error, but there is some believer or other, whose heart God shall move, ready to convince it by the word of God: And so, error is as soon discovered and detected, as it is published; and as soon destroyed as it is detected: the word of God, though from a private Christian, being more mighty to destroy error, than error can be to uphold itself against the word.

3. Prophesying is a most useful means to keep out error, in this respect, because it gives the church light how to choose faithful teachers out of its own children, when it stands in need of any supply of this kind. Seeing, through the exercise of prophesying, the church knows and discerns which of it members are most spiritual, and most clearly taught of God in divine things; and who have received the most excellent gifts from Christ, and so are most fit and able to hold forth the word of life, in most evidence and power of the Spirit, that so the church may be supplied with pastors of her own sons, and not seek after unknown persons; nor be constrained to use mercenary men, who have been brought up to preaching, as their trade to live by; whereupon, but few of them can be expected to be other than hirelings, who will make their ministry serve their own advantage, and frame the scripture to found such doctrine as may best serve their own turns.

And in these three respects, the use of prophesying helps the church to keep out error.

Now if any shall object against this, That it may seem very rash and absurd, after an able, learned man hath spoken in the church, for an unlearned mechanic presently to rise up and speak.

I return this answer; That the true people of God are all taught of God; and the true church is a kingdom of prophets, through the anointing of the Spirit; and so they esteem not that to be learning in the church, which

is from man, but only that which is heard and learned from the Father; and so they neither reckon him that hath human learning, to be learned here; nor him that is destitute to be ignorant. Yea farther, in this society, God will have him who is most unlearned, according to human literature, to speak, that the virtues of Christ may the more evidently appear in the saints; and the knowledge of heavenly and divine truths may not be attributed to gifts, parts, learning or studies, but only to his Spirit, which can even in a moment, teach the ignorant, and make the simple wise: and open the mouths of babes and sucklings, yea, and the very dumb, to perfect his praise by. Whereas, when a man of great parts and learning, speaks with wisdom and knowledge in the church, this is commonly attributed to his wit and study, and so God loses all or most of his praise; but if a plain, ignorant man, shall speak spiritually and divinely, and hold forth the mystery of the gospel in a clear light, then men must needs acknowledge God to be author of such grace, and say, "God is in him of a truth:" and so God is acknowledged the author of his own gifts, and he himself is admired in his saints.

It will be again objected.

Yea, but if every one have liberty to speak in the church, will not this breed great confusion and disturbance?

I answer, no; not in the true church, which are a people met in the name of Christ, and who have Christ himself present in the midst of them, and so every one demeans himself answerably to the presence of Christ; that is, in the wisdom, meekness, and modesty of the Spirit. And there also every one speaks, not after the rashness of his own brain, but according to the revelation of God, as it is written, *If any thing be revealed to another, let the first hold his peace:* So that no man is to speak here

but by revelation or an inward teaching and discovery of God. And where men speak thus, as the true church is to speak, there can be no confusion, but most excellent order and decency. Yea, God himself, who is not the author of confusion, but of peace, in all the churches of the saints, he hath appointed and commanded prophesying as the way of peace; and therefore do not thou dare to say it is the way of confusion, seeing God knows better how to order the affairs of his own church than thou dost.

Wherefore, seeing prophesying is God's ordinance in the church, for the peace of it; if any sort of men shall, notwithstanding what hath been said, still attribute to themselves a proper and incommunicable ministry, or the only power to speak in the church; I shall but use the apostles words to them, and so pass on from this thing; *What, came the word of God only unto you? and is it to come out only from you?* 1 Cor. xiv. 36. Nay, it is come to every believer as well as to you; and it is also to come forth from all of them, unto whom it is come; seeing they cannot but speak what they do believe.

5. The last means I shall name, whereby the true church may keep error out of itself, is, to exercise its power in judging doctrines; as *Paul* commandeth, 1 Cor. xiv. 29. *Let the Prophets speak, two or three, and let the rest judge.* If they that publish doctrine should also be judges of it, and the people be bound to subscribe to their judgment, error would not only by this means have opportunity to be vented, but would also be established and confirmed without the least contradiction. But now God hath appointed it otherwise in the church; for whoever speaks there, the hearers are to judge of the truth of the doctrine; and accordingly are either to receive it or reject it, having power to do either as they see occasion; and so error cannot prevail in that church where

the faithful have liberty to judge of all doctrines, and do exercise that liberty. But where they that publish doctrine are also the judges of it, and the people are bound up to the doctrine of the teachers, and may not question or contradict it; there error reigns as in its proper kingdom.

And thus, by these means, error may certainly be kept out of the church, that the church may live in truth and peace.

But here now a great question will be moved, and that is this,

Whether the magistrate hath not power to suppress error by the sword; and whether the church may not use this remedy against error, as well as those before named?

I answer; That many men of great eminency have attributed such a power to the magistrate; and have done him the honour, besides his throne in the world, to erect him a throne in God's kingdom, at the least equal to Christ: thinking that religion would soon be lost, if he should not uphold it. And to make this good, they have produced many scriptures of the Old Testament, which seem to arm the magistrate against the authors and spreaders of errors.

But I desire the wise hearted to consider, whether as clear scriptures may not be produced out of the Old Testament to prove, that temporal power in the world belongs to ecclesiastical men, as that spiritual power in the church belongs to wordly magistrates? And to this purpose (because I would not be too large in this matter now) I shall desire him who hath a mind to be instructed to read and weigh the reply of the *French* Prelates to the lord *Peters*, which he may find in *Fox's* book of Martyrs, vol. 1. p. 467.

Wherefore, seeing the scriptures of the Old Testament are every whit as strong to give ministers power in temporal matters, as magistrates in spiritual; it is without all question, the only sure and safe way to determine this cause by the New Testament, or the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, by whom in these last days God hath spoken fully to the church, and after whose doctrine there is no other word to be expected. And because herein I find no such power given to the civil magistrate, to judge and determine in spiritual matters, therefore I conclude he hath none.

Now if any shall say, This is a great wrong to the magistrate, to thrust his power out of the church, and to confine it to the world.

I answer; That to make the church an ecclesiastical kingdom, standing in outward laws, orders, authority, dignity, promotion, government; all which are to be granted, established, and managed by state power, and yet to deny the magistrate's authority and influence in these things, which flow from his own power, and consist in it and by it; this is to straiten and to wrong him indeed. But to declare the true church to be a spiritual kingdom, as Christ hath made it, and not at all of this world, but the very kingdom of heaven upon earth, and thereupon to deny him power in it; is no more to prejudice the magistrate, than to deny him power in heaven. Seeing the Son's kingdom, which is heaven on earth, is to be as free from wordly and human power, as the Father's kingdom, which is heaven in heaven: Christ being to be all in all, in this, as God is to be all in all, in that.

And so to deny the magistrate that power which Christ never granted him, is no wrong to him at all; but to grant and gratify him with such power, would be a great and intolerable wrong to the truth and church of

Christ; as in many other things, so in this matter we are speaking of, as you may see in the following particulars.

For the putting the power of the sword into the magistrate's hands to suppress error, is attended with these evils.

1. Hereby the magistrate is made a judge of doctrines, and hath power given him to pronounce which is truth and which is error; being yet no more infallible, yea, every whit as liable to err, as the meanest of the people. And what magistrate is there, that hath the power of the sword, but will uphold his own religion and judgment to be the truth, though ever so false; and will sentence whatever is contrary thereunto to be error, though ever so true? And so the truth and word of God, which only is to judge all, and itself to be judged of none, by this means is made subject to the judgment of vain man, and shall either be truth or error, as he pleases to call it; and error, when it pleaseth the magistrate, shall be adorned with the glorious title of truth; and shall have his authority to countenance and uphold it. And how great a prejudice this hath been, and is, to the truth, and how great an advantage to error, it is very easy to judge.

Now if any shall say, that the magistrate may not judge of doctrine by himself, and use his sword accordingly; but he may take to him the counsel and advice of godly and able ministers, as now of the Assembly; and so may judge and punish according to their judgment.

I answer; Is it fit that the magistrate, in so great matters, should be blindfolded himself, and see only by other men's eyes?

Again, if the magistrate judge according to the judgment of the ministers, and, depending more on their knowledge than his own, shall draw his sword against

whomsoever they shall persuade him; what higher honour doth he attain to in all this, than to become their executioner? Yea, if he punish amiss, he may prove a very murderer. Pilate, in this case, may be a sea-mark to all the magistrates in the world; who, following the council and judgment of the high priests, put the Son of God himself to death, as if he had been the son of perdition: which, I say, may serve for a sufficient warning, to the end of the world, to all magistrates, that they confide not on the judgment of the clergy, but that they be sure themselves in what they do.

2. The putting power into the magistrate's hands, to suppress error by the sword, gives him full opportunity to destroy and slay the true children of God, if, at any time, he shall mistake, and judge them heretics. For that power which men ignorantly allow a godly magistrate against true heretics, will all magistrates arrogate to themselves, as their just due, against all those that differ from themselves in matters of religion, though their judgment, who so differ from them, be ever so true. And thus the magistrate, who is a most fallible judge in these things, instead of tares, may pluck up the wheat; and kill the faithful, instead of heretics, at his own pleasure, till he have destroyed all the faithful in the land.

Wherefore, let all Christians take heed how they favour the magistrate with this power, to punish those whom he judges heretics; for if he shall change his mind, as he easily may, seeing he is but a man, or if another shall succeed him of another mind, that very sword may be sheathed in their own bowels, which now they draw forth against other men's.

3. When the magistrate assumes power to himself to suppress error, this makes ministers negligent in studying the scriptures; the magistrate doing that by force, which

they ought to do by the word, and so saves them their labour: For, when once the ministers shall have so far interested themselves in the magistrate, as to procure him to call for the gaoler and executioner, against whomsoever shall oppose their doctrine, they will then need no great pains to study the word, that they may be able to convince the gain-sayers, and persuade the rebellious, seeing the magistrate's sword, at all adventure, is to defend their doctrine; and all the objections against it, either from reason or scripture, the hangman is to answer. And so the pastors, having their work, as they conceive, thus done for them to their hands, do commonly betake themselves to ease and idleness, and to the prosecution and enjoyment of worldly things, and grow careless and negligent of the scripture and word of God; whereupon error steals in apace upon the teachers themselves; whereby, by degrees, they corrupt and seduce very many. And thus, whilst the magistrate thinks to chase out error before him one way, he lets it in behind him seven ways.

4. This takes men off from the certain means to destroy error, which is the word; and leads them to that which can never destroy it, which is the sword of the magistrate; and so the devil herein hath a notable stratagem; for he fears not all the swords and halters, and weapons and prisons in the world, to destroy error withal, but as securely contemns all these things, as *Leviathan* a bulrush; and yet doth earnestly stir up the world to use these things against him, and his errors, as the only means to subdue him. Whereas, the only thing he fears, is the word of God, which is that mighty power, that can bind the devil, and destroy his kingdom, and break down all his strongholds of error and heresy; and he is in no sort able to stand out against the power thereof. Wherefore, in his great cunning, he causes men to lay aside this, that is able to prevail against him, and to go to the sword of

the magistrate, which will do him no harm. And thus the sword of the magistrate, presuming to lift itself up against error, instead of the word of God, is so far from destroying error, that it upholds it; and strengthens Satan's kingdom, whilst it seems to destroy it.

By these things it appears, how great an error and evil it is for any to attribute to the magistrate, or for the magistrate to assume to himself, power to suppress error by the sword.

Quest. If any shall yet demand, Whether the magistrate can do nothing at all towards the suppressing of error?

Answ. I answer, This he may do: he may and ought: and if he be a godly man, he will countenance and encourage faithful ministers (that are called of God, and anointed by the Spirit) to this work of the gospel; and having done this, he need not trouble himself any farther; for the word preached will do all the rest. And let it not be doubted, but if the truth of God do enter the lists against error, it will be infinitely able to prevail of itself alone, without calling in any power, or borrowing any weapons from the world.

The ninth rule, is,

By no means to enforce uniformity in the outward orders and discipline of the church. For such uniformity hath been, in all ages, not only the hindrance, but the very break-neck of the church's peace and unity.

Now, because this is so vehemently and strongly urged by the unskilful builders of this age, I shall the more fully acquaint the reader with the state of this business, from the very beginning of the gospel; and shew when this part of the mystery of iniquity first invaded the church of God.

Most manifest it is, that the apostles and disciples of Christ, were only intent about the doctrine of salvation, and so accordingly, preached and pressed nothing but faith

in Christ, and love to all the saints; as being the only necessary things which christians were to regard: And for all outward rites, and ceremonies, and forms, wherein Christ hath made them free, they commanded them to stand fast in that liberty(*t*). And so they gave no heed, nor regard to the observation of days and times, neither bound the church to any ceremonies or rites, except those necessary things mentioned, *Acts* ch. xv. to wit, things strangled, and blood, which was then ordained by the Holy Spirit, not without urgent and necessary cause. For when the murdering and blood of infants, was commonly laid to the charge of christians by the heathens, they had no other argument to help themselves, but their own law, by which they were commanded to abstain from the blood of common beasts, much more from the blood of innocent men. And therefore that law seemeth to be given by the Holy Spirit, and also for the same end to be continued in the church, so long as the cause thereof, that is, the persecutions of the heathen Gentiles, continued. And besides these, we read of no other ceremonies or rites, which the apostles greatly regarded; but left christians at liberty to use or not use certain ceremonial observations; such as days, times, places, meats, drinks, vestures, and all such other things; neither was the diversity among men greatly noted, nor any uniformity greatly required. Thus christian liberty prevailed in the church, and christian men did not much struggle about indifferent things, till the *Asians* and *Romans* began to disagree about *Easter-day*: to compose which controversy, *Plycarpus*, a godly martyr, went to *Rome* (*anno* 157, in the reign of *Antoninus Pius*) to *Anicetus*, then bishop there: and though these two, to

(*t*) *Fox*, vol. 1. p. 72.

wit, *Polycarpus* and *Anicetus*, differed in their judgments and opinions in this matter, yet they still retained christian communion, and avoided all breach of peace(*u*). Afterwards, in the reign of *Commodus*, the christians enjoying some respite from persecution, began to contend again among themselves, about the ceremony of *Easter*; and neither yet did the difference prevail so far, as to break the bond of love and communion of brotherly life: though they of the *West*, pretending the tradition of *Paul* and *Peter*, (which yet indeed was the tradition of *Hermes* and *Pius*, and not theirs) kept one day; and they of *Asia*, pretending the tradition of *John*, kept another. After this, *Victor*, bishop of *Rome*, rose up, a great stickler in the controversy of *Easter*, and would needs have excommunicated the churches of *Asia*, for not yielding to his judgment; to whom, *Iræneus* writing, touching the diversity of outward things used by the primitive christians, hath these words: "Notwithstanding the variety of ceremonies among the former "christians, they all kept peace among themselves; and "we, saith he, still retain it; and the difference of our "fasting, commends the unity of our faith(*x*)." And thus the doctrine of christian liberty remained sound and entire, till this *Victor's* time, which was *anno* 200. And he earnestly endeavoured to draw, or rather inforce, the churches of *Asia* to his opinion. And then began the uniformity of keeping that feast to be first required, as a thing necessary; and all they to be accounted as heretics and schismatics, who dissented from the judgment of the bishop of *Rome*.

Now, against this judgment of *Victor*, *Polycrates*, and many other bishops and brethren of *Asia*, declared; and the matter had burst out into a great flame, had not some

(*u*) Iræn. & Mehex. l. 4.

(*x*) Nihilo tamen minus omnes illi, pacem inter se retinuerunt, & retinemus etiamnum; & jejunii dissonantia, fidei concordiam commendat.

godly men of those times, brought forth the word of God to quench it. Among whom, *Iræneus*, as *Eusebius* relates (*y*), speaks to this effect, "That the variety "and difference of ceremonies, is no strange matter in "the church of Christ, when as this variety is not only "in the day of *Easter*, but also in the manner of fasting, "and in divers other usages among the christians. For "some fast one, some two days, some more; and others, "counting 40 hours, both day and night, reckon that "for their full fast day. And this so divers fashion of "fasting in the church, began not in our time, but in "theirs who lived before us. And yet notwithstanding, "they with all this diversity, were in unity amongst "themselves; and so are we: Neither doth this differ- "ence of ceremonies any thing hinder, but rather com- "mend the agreement of our faith."

And he bringeth forth the examples of the fathers, of *Telesphorus*, *Pius*, *Anicetus*, *Soter*, *Eleutherius*, and such others, who neither observed the same usage themselves, nor prescribed it to others; and yet notwithstanding, kept christian charity with such as came to communicate with them, though not observing the same form of things which they observed; as well appeared by *Palycarpus* and *Anicetus;* who, although they agreed not in one uniform custom of rites, *Communionem tamen inter se habuerunt*, yet had communion with one another. And thus *Iræneus*, in his practice answering his name, persuaded the peace of the church, notwithstanding diversity of forms and rites: And so christian liberty was still preserved in the church against the tyranny of uniformity, till the Nicene council.

And farther; *Socrates*, the writer of the ecclesiastical history, who lived after the days of *Theodosius*, speaking

(*y*) Euseb. l. 5. c. 26.

of the fasting before *Easter*, saith (*z*), "The christians "that dwell at *Rome*, fast three weeks continually before "*Easter*, besides the sabbath and the Sunday; but those "that dwell in *Illyria*, and all *Greece*, and *Alexandria*, "fast six weeks before *Easter*." And, speaking of the several sorts of fasting, in several churches, saith, "And "because none can bring forth any commandment, writ- "ten of this matter, it is plain, that the apostles left this "fast free to every man's mind and will; that no man "might be compelled by fear and necessity, to do that "which is good."

And in the same chapter he relates many different forms and usages in several christian churches, and concludes that matter thus: "But, saith he (*a*), to commit "to writing all the rites of cuhrches, that are used in "each city and country, as it would be very troublesome, "so hardly could it be done."

And yet farther; I find that *Austin*, who was sent into *England* by Pope *Gregory*, *anno* 598, among other questions to the Pope, propounds this as one: "That "seeing there is but one faith, how it should happen, "that the customs and ceremonies of the churches "should be so divers?"

And *Gregory* returns this answer, "The custom of "the church of *Rome*, what it is, you know; wherein "you have been brought up from your youth: but ra- "ther it pleaseth me better, that whether it be in the "church of *Rome*, or in any *French* church, where ye "find any thing that seemeth better, to the service and "pleasing of God, that ye choose the same; and so in-

(*z*) Perspicuum est, apostolos liberam potestatem in eadem, cujusque menti & arbitrio permisisse, ut quisque nec metu, nec necessitate inductus, quod bonum sit ageret. *Socrat. l.* 5. *c.* 19.

(*a*) Verum omnes ecclesiarum ritus, qui in singulis urbibus regionibusque usurpantur, scriptis mandare, ut valde laboriosum est, ita vix aut ne vix quidem fieri potest.

"fer, and bring into the *English* church (which is yet "new in the faith) the best and choicest things, chos- "en out of many churches. For things are not to be "beloved for the place's sake, but the place is to be be- "loved for the things that are good. Wherefore, such "things as are good, godly and religious, those choose "out of all churches, and introduce among your people, "that they may take root in the minds of Englishmen."

So that yet you see, the church was not enslaved by any enforced uniformity, but kept its own christian freedom, till Antichrist grew up to more height, and got the secular power of princes to do what he listed in the church; and then, he and his clergy made laws of all that seemed good in their own eyes, and enforced men to them against their wills. And thus he reigned for many hundred years together, till the determinate time of the apostacy began to be fulfilled; and then God poured forth his Spirit upon some chosen servants of his, to oppose Antichrist, as in other parts of the *mystery of iniquity*, so in this also of uniformity. Among others, who, after the general falling away, opposed this uniformity, was *John Gerson*, chancellor of *Paris*, who lived about an 100 years before *Luther*, and, in many things, received much clear light from God: he, in his sermon before the king of *France*, in the name of the university of *Paris*, *pro pace & unione Græcorum*, in his 7th consideration, speaks thus.

"Men ought not generally to be bound by the positive "determinations of Popes, (and it will as well hold of all "others, who arrogate to themselves an ecclesiastical su- "premacy, whether they be councils or assemblies) to "hold and believe one and the same manner of govern- "ment, in things that do not immediately concern the "truth of our faith, or of the evangelical law. And he "saith, this consideration, well taken and understood,

"would be the principal key to open a door of peace "between the *Greeks* and *Latins*, who differ in many out- "ward forms and rules: as in baptism, the *Latin* church "saith, I baptise thee; the Greek *Baptizetur servus* "*Christi*, 'Let this servant of Christ be baptized.' And "in the supper, the *Latin* church useth unleavened, the "*Greek* leavened bread, &c. And herein he spake as a "christain, that said *Quælibet provincia abundet sensu* "*suo*, 'Let every province abound in its own sense.' "Note also, saith he, that a good prince permits divers "laws and customs, of divers of his subjects, so they "be not evidently against the law of nature: And not to "do so, would often be the destruction of the common- "wealth. As the lord of *Arras*, a city of *Picardie*, was "wont to say, that *Flanders* would be governed otherwise "than *France* or *Burgundy*. And this consideration, saith "he rightly understood, (to wit, not to press uniformity "in the church, but to let the church use its liberty in "these things) would be an excellent beginning of the "reformation of the church, notwithstanding the con- "tradiction of many of the court of *Rome* (*b*)."

Luther also, that chosen vessel of Christ, did clearly oppose this evil of uniformity: He thus delivers his judg- ment touching uniformity of ceremonies; "If one church "will not follow another of its own accord in those out- "ward things, what need is there that it should be com- "pelled by the decrees of councils, which presently are "turned into laws, and snares of souls. And therefore, "let one church freely imitate another; or let it be suf- "fered to use its own way, so that unity of Spirit be "preserved in faith and the word, though there be va-

(*b*) Homines non generaliter astringi debent, per determinationes positivas paparum, ad tenendum & credendum, unum eundemque gubernandi modum, in rebus quæ non proxime respiciunt, vel sine medio, fidei nostræ veritatem, vel legis Evangelicæ.

"riety and diversity in the flesh, or elements of the "world (*c*)."

Again, the same *Luther*, after he had set down a form of celebrating the supper, for the church of Christ at *Wittenberg*, concludes thus, *In quibus omnibus cavendum, ne legem ex libertate faciamus, &c.* That is, "In all which "we must take heed, that we make not a law, of liberty; "or constrain them to sin, who shall either do otherwise, "or shall omit some things, so they permit the words "of blessing to remain entire, and do all act here in "faith. For these ought to be the rites of CHRISTIANS, "that is, of the children of the FREE-WOMAN; who "may keep them willingly, and of their own accord; hav- "ing power to change them, when, and as often as they "will. And therefore there is no cause that any should "either desire, or establish any necessary form, as a law "in this matter, whereby he may either ensnare, or trou- "ble men's consciences. And therefore we read not in "the ancient fathers, or primitive church, any example "of any such rite, but only in the *Roman* church. And "if so be they had established any thing for a law in this "matter, we ought not to have kept it;" *Quod legibus hic obstringi, nec possent, nec debent*; "Because these things "neither could, nor ought to be bound by laws. More- "over, if divers men shall use a diverse rite, let none ei- "ther judge or contemn another; but let every one abound "in his own sense; and let us all savour and judge the "same things, though for forms we act diversly: and let "each rite please others, lest by diversity of rites, follow "diversity of opinions and sects, as it came to pass in "the church of *Rome*. For outward rites, as we cannot

(*c*) Si una ecclesia alteram non vult imitari externis istis, quid opus est conciliorum decretis cogi, quæ mox in leges & animarum laqueos vertuntur? Imitatur ergo altera alteram libere, aut suis moribus sinatur frui; modo unitas spiritus salva sit in fide & verbo quantumvis sit diversitas, & varietas in carne & elemento mundi.

" want them, either as meat or drink, so neither do they " commend us to God, but only faith and love commend " us to him. And therefore let that of *Paul* take place here, " *That the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but* " *righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit;* and so " no rite nor form is the kingdom of God, but faith " within us, &c."

And at the end of the same form, for the church of *Wittenberg*, which he writes out for *Nicholas Hausmannus*, a godly minister, he saith, " Which copy, either " you or others may follow if you please; if not, we wil- " lingly give place to the anointing, being ourselves to " receive from you, or any others, more profitable " things (*d*)." These things he spake like a christian indeed, and we acknowledge the voice of Christ in him; as in others, that act these things peremptorily, and command and inforce them by secular power, we are sensible of the voice of strangers, and of such strangers, as are thieves and murderers.

Melancthon also, persuades certain christians to unity, who differed in uniformity, in these words. " Seeing we " do agree among ourselves in the chief articles of chris- " tian doctrine, let us embrace one another with mutual " love; and let not unlikeness, and variety of rites and " ceremonies, [and *Bucer*, quoting this place, adds, no, " nor of ecclesiastical government] disjoin our minds (*e*)."

Upon all these testimonies, which these godly men give from the light of the word, which we acknowledge in them, it is evident, that all forms are to be left free to

(*d*) Cujus exemplar sicubi & aliis placuerit imitari, licet: sin minus, unctioni libenter locum dabimus, pariti, a vobis & quibusvis aliis, commodiora accipere.

(*e*) Cum de præcipuis articulis doctrinæ christianæ inter nos constet, complectemur nos mutuo amore, neque dissimilitas & varietas rituum & ceremoniarum, disjungere debet mentes nostras.

the faithful, and congregations of saints. And when any shall set down any form, the congregations of the faithful may use them, so far forth as they please; or may add, or alter, or wholly reject them; and no laws are to be made in this matter, (which the secular power should inforce) to insnare consciences, and to infringe christian liberty, and to straiten the Spirit in those in whom it dwells, and to obscure the virtues of Christ in his people.

Wherefore it is most evident, that they are most horribly mistaken, that now urge external uniformity on the church, as the only means of unity; who, scarcely minding, I am sure not naming "one body, one spirit, one hope of calling, one Lord, faith, baptism," &c. to make the church one, do earnestly and fiercely labour for one outward form and order, one directory, one confession, one catechism, one discipline, (and to have these things, of their own devising, inforced on the church by the power of the state) as the only means their hearts can find out to make the church one. But the Seers are blind in this matter, and *the prophets prophesy false things*. For if the unity of the church stand only or chiefly in uniformity, what woeful division will be found in it? For the fathers before the flood lived in one form; the fathers after the flood, in another; the believers under the law, in another; the believers under the gospel in another; yea, these being free from all forms, used any according to the wisdom of the Spirit: Christ himself, and *John* Baptist, who both lived in the same time, observed no uniformity between them; for *John* lived retiredly in the wilderness, and came neither eating nor drinking; and Christ lived in the frequency of the world, and did both eat and drink. And their disciples observed no uniformity; for *John's disciples fasted oft*, and Christ's not at all in those days. Besides, at first, the believing *Jews* used another form than the believing *Gentiles*: and

afterwards among the *Gentiles*, the *Greek* church used one form, the *Latin* another; and several churches under both, several forms; and so the church on earth, according to the infirmity of the flesh, still uses some or other form; and the church in heaven, is without all form. Now then, if we shall have no unity but where there is uniformity, what an earthquake of confusion and division will this make through the whole church of God, in all ages, and under all God's own dispensations in the world, yea, through the whole church in earth and heaven? Wherefore, I dare be bold to affirm, that imposed and inforced uniformity, is one of the greatest enemies to the true church's unity, that Antichrist himself could devise. And therefore, let not the true church suffer itself to be reduced under this bondage again, through specious pretences of reformation; but let the church know, it may use what forms seem good to itself; and that its true unity stands in being in one body, and one spirit, &c. as hath been before declared. And thus only, the church in all ages, is one, yea, thus only the church in earth and heaven, is one.

And therefore; I desire the faithful to know, that uniformity is to be kept out; or if it be brought in, it is to be cast out, for the preserving of peace in the church. For, that God might make *Jews* and *Gentiles* one, He *abolished the laws of commandments contained in ordinances*, Ephes. ii. 15. Whence it is evident, that God so highly valued the peace of the faithful, that to bring this about, he repeals his own institutions, and dissolves his own outward ordinances. Now if the ceremonies of God's own ordaining were to be made void, rather than to continue to the prejudice of the church's unity; how much more any ceremonies, or outward rules of our own or other men's devising? *Let him that reads, understand.*

And these are the practical rules in the way of the church's peace, that are more absolute and general.

And now we hasten to the rules that are more special and occasional, in case of differences among the faithful. In which case, we are necessarily, in the first place, to consider the weight of the things wherein they differ, to wit, whether those things be such as are necessary to salvation, or no.

If they be not such things as are necessary to salvation; then, first, they are either things ceremonial or circumstantial; or secondly, very truths themselves; yet such, wherein a christian may, for the present, err without danger of salvation.

If the difference be in circumstantial and ceremonial things, we should mind these things to preserve peace.

1. That we ought not to contend for vanities; nor to trouble ourselves and the church of God with trifles, and things of no weight or moment at all. It is a wonder to us in these days, that the ancient christians should so earnestly contend about the day on which *Easter*, as they called it, was to be celebrated; and upon difference herein, should divide into sects as they did; seeing there always shone light enough in the gospel, to declare this to be a slight circumstance not worth the minding. The apostle exhorts the *Philippians*, to strive together for the faith of the gospel, but no where for the form of it, in one thing or other.

2. We ought not, for contrary-mindedness in these things, to avoid christian converse and communion with one another; for strangeness of christians in these cases, both breeds and increases suspicions and jealousies, and causes that we harbour hard thoughts, brother against brother; and it takes away all apportunities of conference, and of understanding and persuading one another, and so of reconciliation.

3. In these things which do not commend us to God, we are not to condemn one another: for to con-

demn one another for every difference in judgment, produces innumerable sects in the church, than which nothing can be more destructive to the peace of it; seeing such deadly enmity arises among sects, as we see by daily experience. And therefore, that rash judgment that produces these sects, is the great enemy to the peace of the church, and the great advancer of the devil's work of division.

4. Let us know wherein the essence of God's kingdom stands, to wit, *in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit*, in faith and love, &c. and not in outward ceremonies and orders; and where the power and substance of God's kingdom is, let us be contented, though there is a difference in form and circumstances. Let us take careful heed, that we do nothing against the power and substance of godliness, under pretence of the form and circumstance. The highest good in the church, is salvation in Christ; and the end of all gifts, given to all apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, is to bring us all to the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God. And if so be that this be done, the church is not to be troubled with other things; yea, all other things are to give way to this. Where the heavenly things themselves are present, we ought not, in these days of grace and truth, to contend about the shadows of them.

5. In case men differ in judgment, in these circumstantial things, such as are in present power, ought to take care especially,

1. That they do not entertain men into the communion of saints, that are only of one judgment: but that every one to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven are given, may have free liberty to go in and out, and find pasture. It is a most antichristian thing, to make ano-

ther key to the kingdom of heaven, or true church, besides that which Christ hath given; for then it will soon come to pass, that Christ's keys will not be sufficient without man's also; yea, soon it shall come to pass, that man's key shall be sufficient, without Christ's; that is, it will not be reckoned sufficient for men to be believers, and to have received the gift of the Spirit, to make them of the church, unless they also conform to the judgments of such and such men; but to be of their judgments, will be enough to make them of the church, though they be destitute of faith, and the Spirit. And thus, by making another key to God's kingdom, besides the key that Christ hath given, and so to let in those that should be kept out, and keep out those that should be let in; this must needs be avoided, as extremely prejudicial to the peace of the church.

2. They must take care that they do not prefer christians to places of public ministry and employment, that are only of one judgment; but that they dispose of them alike to godly men of either judgment; lest otherwise, many smell the design of Antichrist underneath; which is, *that none shall buy, or sell, or have any place in the church*, or universities, but only such as have taken a certain mark into their foreheads and right hands. And though the outward mark of the mystery may change, yet the inward mind and meaning of it doth not change with the change of form.

3. If one sort of christians be not to be admitted as members, or preferred as officers in the church, more than another; much less is one party to be destroyed for another; for thus would Satan also be a prince of peace, who would destroy Christ's kingdom to exalt his own, that he might possess all quietly and alone: but Christ's way is to reconcile those that differ in these things, and *of twain, to make them one new man in himself.* And

so we shall be like Christ, if we seek to bring both into one, in love, and not to destroy either, by force.

These rules are to be observed as means of peace, if the things be circumstantial.

Now if they be very truths wherein christians differ, yet such, wherein they may err without danger of salvation, then these rules are of use.

1. To hear them speak their judgments with freedom, and not to condemn them, unheard; for thus mayest thou soon condemn the innocent, and make thyself guilty.

2. To understand fully what thy adversary means, before thou contend against him; lest, if thou want this wisdom and patience, thou opposest not so much his judgment, as thy own conceit. Much better is it, calmly to hear a man's mind from himself, than hastily to guess at it; yea, to conclude it is so, before thou hast heard him speak. If thou canst but have patience to hear him relate his own mind, perhaps in the end thou shalt understand it dffers little from thy own, in substance.

3. Reproach not any thing thy adversary speaks, with this, That thou never heardest it before: for this may not so much discover his error, as thy ignorance; and that which seems to thee a new error, if it be truly examined by the word, may prove an old truth. And if thou wilt needs condemn whatever savours of novelty, how shall the truths we yet know not be brought in; or the errors that yet remain with us, be purged out?

4. Be not over confident in what thou holdest upon thy own judgment, or other men's, strengthened from multitude, custom and antiquity; for men have erred most grosly, even in those things wherein they have thought themselves most certain: And therefore, *Prove all things, that thou mayest hold fast that which is good.*

It is much better to hold fast the truth, upon clear grounds from the word, than upon the strongest presumptions of thy own heart.

5. In these differences, make the word the judge, and not men. The word of God rightly understood is the sole and perfect judge, in all the things of God. And therefore one said well, *Qui ponit legem judicem, ponit Deum qui autem addit hominem, addit & bestiam:* that is, He that makes the law judge, makes God judge; but he that makes man judge, makes a beast judge; for every man is brutish in his knowledge: And then only are we sure of any thing, when we have the word of God for it. Though it is not sufficient to take the word literally in any fashion for judge in these matters; but we must necessarily attain the knowledge of it, by the teaching of the Spirit; seeing we see so many differences of judgments among men, that make use alike of the same outward word for their rule. Now though all have the same outward word, yet all are not of one mind, except they attain to one Spirit; for *Paul* saith 1 *Cor.* ii. that only *the Spirit of God knows the things of God:* Neither doth man's sense or reason understand the things of the Spirit, but the spiritual man judgeth all things. And hence it follows, that we can only judge aright of divine truths by the word, and we can only judge aright of the word, if we have the Spirit to be the interpreter of it to us.

6. If thou cannot prevail with him by the word, that he should agree with thee, wherein he differs; then observe that moderate and christain rule of *Paul;* where he saith, *As many as be perfect, be thus minded; if any be otherwise minded, God shall also reveal this to him*: Phil. iii. 15, 16. And so let us wait with patience, till God, of his good pleasure, shall please to teach him, as he hath been pleased to teach us; because, without this teaching, he

can never know it aright, though thou teach him ever so much.

7. And lastly, When, in many inconsiderable points of religion, we cannot agree with many that are truly faithful, nor they with us; let us, according to *Paul's* rule, leave the final judgment of these things to the due time appointed of God; as *Paul* hath said,—— *Judge nothing before the time:* And if you ask, what time this is? Christ hath told us, saying, *If any one hear my word, and believe not, I judge him not: but the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.* For the things of God are so far beyond the sense, reason, knowledge, judgment, and discerning of all the men in the world, that many times the purest things are reckoned vile, and the most spiritual things, carnal; and the very highest things of the mystery of God and Christ, but conceits or errors; and therefore it is fit that the judgment of these things, which are so far beyond human comprehension, should be deferred to the last day; God's judgment being better in his own time, than in ours.

Now in case the doctrine, wherein we differ, be such as is absolutely necessary to salvation, and without believing which, men can have no interest in Christ; yet even in this case,

1. Hear them speak, and be rather confident that the truth of God will prevail over their error, than fearful, that their error will prevail against the truth: and so strive not for secular power to shut up mens mouths, and to restrain mens writings, though they speak and print things that seem ever so contrary to the truth of God, and doctrine of the gospel: For if men have not liberty to divulge their doctrines publicly, they will spread them privately, to infect and corrupt many, ere it can be known or prevented; and if men vent errors publicly, if there be as public liberty to preach the truth, I

doubt not the success of the truth against it at any time, with all that belong to God. And it is the only gospel way, to conquer error by the truth, and all human, yea, and devilish doctrines, by the gospel; which is the ministration of the Spirit, and therefore so mighty, that all false teachers and false doctrines must needs fall down before it; seeing, *stronger is that Spirit that is in it, than that Spirit that is in the world*, which is its own spirit, and the devil's. And if the gospel of Christ have given already such proof of its power in former times, when the whole world lay in horrible ignorance and error, *and darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people;* and yet the gospel alone, without any conjunction of earthly power, of states and kingdoms with it, did bind the devil, and cast him out of his possessions and dominions, and overthrew all false religions which men had received from their fore-fathers, through many generations; and changed the manners, customs, opinions, religions, and very natures of men, and utterly dispelled errors and heresies of all sorts; I say, seeing the gospel hath already given such large testimony of its power, and made so great a conquest of the world, when it was wholly under the power of the devil; I see no reason that we should now so doubt the power of it, as to suffer no man to say any thing but what likes us, or what is indeed agreeable to the word; as if error should have now gotten more power to make void the word, than the word power to make void error. Wherefore, if the word be suffered to have free passage, I dare rest on that alone (and so dare all that have felt the power of it in their own hearts) for the conquering and destroying all errors and heresies whatsoever, in the true church of God. And now it would be profitable to hear what some other men, who have walked in the same light and spirit, have said in this matter.

Zuinglius (in his book, quoted in the margin *(f)*, speaks thus, *Hæc unica, eaque sola viaest, qua ad concordiam proximè perveniri potest*, &c. that is, "This is the one and only "way, whereby we may most suddenly attain to con- "cord; if whatsoever things may be, or are commonly "said for any opinion, or against it, be freely propound- "ed in the churches, so that the people be allowed free "judgment in all these things. For God, who is not "the God of discord, but of peace, never suffers those "who are gathered together in his Spirit, to err or be "deceived. And if this way were observed, we should "shortly see the churches of Christ enjoying sweet peace "and concord. But now, as often as there are some "princes and cities, that would have the doctrine of the "gospel free to all, presently there are others that would "stop and hinder the course of it; and so long there "must needs arise great discords and dissentions. And "hence I would have you judge, whether you or we are "departed from the church of God, and the doctrine of "it. For we suffer those writings that proceed as well "from you, as from the papists, to be openly and freely "read, and read again; and the evils which are taught "in them, we slay by the sword of the Spirit, which is "the word of God: but you think all this business may "be dispatched with PUBLIC EDICTS AND COMMANDS. "And therefore do you be judge, whose cause is most "to be suspected; ours, who suffer the doctrine of our "adversaries to be published in our churches, and over- "throw them by the word; or yours, who reproach our "doctrine before the simple people, as heretical; in the "mean time, by your good will, neither suffering them "to read it, nor understand it." Thus far he.

Luther also, in his epistle to *Frederick* and *John*, dukes of *Saxony*, speaking against that spirit which he calls *Spi-*

(f) Zuingl. respon. ad libel. Strethionis, tom. 2. f. 302.

ritus Alstetinus, a proud, haughty, enthusiastical spirit, that despised faith, and love, and the cross, and the whole scriptures, as low things, not worth their minding, and gloried in strange revelations, and superlative holiness, which they had above other believers: and these enemies of the gospel, especially, were gathered together in *Alsteta*; and *Luther* writes to the dukes, in whose province this town was, to this purpose, touching them: *Quod vero præsentis, interest negotii, nolim ab illustrissimis D. V. prædicandi officium præcludi cuiquam (g)*, That is, "But for what pertains to our present business, I would not that the office of preaching should be denied to any, by your most illustrious lordships; but let there be granted to them free liberty to preach, and let them exhibit the best proof of their learning. For I said, by the testimony of *Paul*, *It must needs be, that there must be sects*; and the word of God must strive, and wage war in camps. And therefore it is evident in *Psal* lxvii. that the evangelists are called *armies*, and that Christ, in the Psalms, is called more than once, the *king of armies*. Now if their spirit be a right and approved spirit, it will easily subsist before us without all fear: and so if our spirit be right, as we hope it is, it will fear neither them, nor any body else, but if they transgress the bounds of the gospel, and will not contain their hands, but will do their work with violence, it is the duty of your most illustrious lordships, when they grow fierce and seditious, to repress them, or to banish them out of your dominions; saying, we will easily grant to you, to fight with the word, for the proving and examining which, is true doctrine: but we will restrain the fierceness of your spirits, and contain your hands; for these things belong to our magistracy. And therefore they that will not herein obey, let them depart the country: For, saith he, we who are ministers of the word, may preach, but we must do no violence; and

(g) Luther. Farrag. epistol. tom. 7. f. 509.

Daniel hath witnessed, that *Antichrist should be destroyed without hands:* And *Isaiah* saith, that Christ shall fight in his kingdom, with the *Spirit of his mouth and the rod of his lips*, &c."

Also *Albertus*, duke of *Borussia*, when the great controversy fell out between *Andreas Osiander*, and *Morlinus*, and other ministers, touching the righteousness whereby a christian is made righteous before God, he would not forbid either side, either the pulpit or press; but left them free to both alike, and desired them to forbear reproaches one against another, and to debate the business quietly by the word of God.

Likewise the *Bohemians*, in a certain exhortation of theirs to kings and princes, to stir them up to the zeal of the gospel, subscribed by *Procopius* and *Conradus*, and other captains of the *Bohemians*, have these words; "They say (that is the Papists) it ought not to be suffered, that we should be heard, in confessing our faith *(h)*. Now, how may they be proved by the holy scripture, since Christ heard the devil, as it is written, *Matt.* iv.? And they are not better than Christ, nor we worse than the devil. If they be righteous, and have the truth with them, as they say they have, and we be unrighteous, why do they fear? since the truth ought not to be afraid of falsehood; and *Zorobabel* declared, That *truth is, of all things, the most mighty, and overcometh all things.* 2 Esd. iii. For Christ is the truth. *John* xiv. *I am the way, the truth;* and the devil *is the father of lies.* John viii. Therefore if the Pope and his priests have the truth, let them overcome us with the word of God: but if they have lies, then they cannot long abide, in all their presumption. Wherefore, we exhort and beseech all the imperial cities, all kings, princes, noblemen, rich, poor, for God's sake, and for his righ-

(h) Fox Martyrolog. vol. 1. p. 858.

teousness, that one of them write hereof to another, and that there may be some means made, how we may commune with you safely, and friendly, at some such place, as shall be fit both for you and us: and bring with you your bishops and teachers, and let them and our teachers fight together with the word of God, and let us hear them; and let not one overcome the other by violence or false subtilty, but only by the word of God, &c."

By all which it appears, that let men's doctrine be what it will, they ought to be heard, and convinced by the word, and not presently to be silenced, and subdued by force.

Now secondly, If upon hearing and debating things by the word, it shall clearly appear, that our adversaries hold such things, which are so false and erroneous, that they cannot be reckoned believers and members of Christ that hold them; nor can retain those doctrines, without unavoidable damnation: then in this case, the true church hath authority from the word to do these things;

1. To condemn the doctrine.
2. To excommunicate their persons.

1. The church ought to condemn the doctrine, as contrary to the gospel, and to that eternal and unchangeable, and most clear and certain truth which Christ hath heard from the Father, and delivered to his church; which is *the faith once given to the saints*, and never to be altered. And so to tell the people, what doctrine it is; even such as carries in it an utter enmity to Christ and his Spirit; and so consequently, death and damnation; and that therefore they are to take heed to it, as they love eternal life, and would avoid eternal death.

And thus Christ condemned the doctrine of the scribes, and of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees, and bid his

disciples, *Beware of them;* and *Paul*, the doctrine of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, *which did eat as a canker*, *&c.*

2. The church, in this case, may also excommunicate the person; yea, though he should be silent, and not seduce others; seeing believers can have no true communion with such a one, who is in enmity to the word of life, in which all the true communion of the faithful stands. Wherefore, such persons may justly be cut off from the society of the faithful. But herein also these rules are to be observed; to wit,

1. That this censure be not proceeded to for every varying from the truth, (as is already said) but for denying such truths, or holding such errors, as make a man incapable of salvation.
2. That this be not done, till all other ways have been tried to reclaim them.
3. That this be done, not by two or three persons, but by the whole church, or communion.
4. That it be done, not by their own, but by Christ's authority, who is always present in his church, as the head of that body; and that it be done, not by any human passion or violence, but by the efficacy of the holy Spirit, who is always present among believers, as the Spirit of those members.

And this excommunication thus regulated, is the last punishment the church can inflict, by the warrant and authority of Christ: and it cannot imprison any, or banish them, or fine them, or put them to death; for we must not expound that place of *Paul*, *Hæreticum hominum devita*, as *Hugo Charensis* did, to take a heretic out of his life; but him that is a heretic we must avoid, we we must not kill; the former being Christ's rule; the latter Antichrist's.

Conclusion. Now these things have I spoken and propounded to the faithful and churches of Christ, wherever the providence of God shall cast this book, which may

travel farther on this errand, than weak flesh can do: and I so propound them all, as being most ready myslef to hear from any, what they can propound in more light and evidence of the word. And I do humbly and earnestly intreat all faithful christians, that whatever they shall conceive of my judgment in these matters, they will yet take in good part my care to recover and preserve peace and unity in the true church of Christ: The desire of which, through God's goodness, is much stronger in my heart, than any private interest or respect of mine own.

THE

CRUCIFIED AND QUICKENED

CHRISTIAN,

OR A

DISCOURSE

ON GALLATIANS II. 19, 20.

Which, for the Sum and Substance of it, was first spoken briefly at his Excellencies, the Lord General *Cromwell's* House; and was afterwards more largely delivered in *Clement's* Parish in *Cambridge;*

AND

Is now made Public, for the justification of the Truth, the profit of the Faithful, and the stopping the Mouth of Iniquity.

BY WILLIAM DELL,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AND MASTER OF GONVIL AND CAIUS COLLEGE,

IN CAMBRIDGE.

Magna patientiâ opus est, ad sustinendas calumnias Malignantis Ecclesiæ,
LATIMER, MARTYR.

In omnibus aliis cedam cuivis: Verbum deserere & negare, nec possum, nec volo.
LUTHER, EPISTOL. AD LEON. DECIMUM.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN,

I DESIRE thee to understand, that the great mystery of Christ, which was kept secret all the time of the law, was clearly opened by the Father and the Spirit, in the first beginning of the gospel; and then again (according to the wonderful counsel of God) after a few years, was closed up, that antichrist might have opportunity to come forth into the word; but the days of the abomination of desolation, its standing in the holy place, being now nearly finished, God hath begun again to reveal that great mystery of God in Christ, and to make it manifest by that Spirit, which shall glorify Christ, and shall consume antichrist, and all his accursed kingdom; and the day is now making haste, wherein the Lord God and the Lamb shall become the temple, wherein the saved of the nations shall worship, and also the light in which they shall walk. This the people shall see, and flow together; and the glory and honour of the nations shall be brought in hither. Wherefore, do thou believe and pray; for the Lord lives to accomplish all these things. And in this faith and hope, I rest,

Thine to serve thee, in the word of
truth, and mystery of God,
WILLIAM DELL.

THE

CRUCIFIED AND QUICKENED

CHRISTIAN.

GAL. ii. 20.

I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

IN this chapter we have one apostle contending against another, *Paul* against *Peter*, and that about the truth of the gospel, in a very chief point. For *Peter*, in the absence of the *Jews*, lived among the Gentiles, after the manner of the Gentiles, for outward conversation; wholly laying aside the Mosaical rites and ceremonies. But when certain Jews came from *James*, *Peter* did withdraw from the Gentiles, and from the use of that freedom and liberty of the gospel, wherein he had walked with them, and lived again with the Jews, after the manner of the Jews, in the use of the Jewish ceremonies.

By which practice of his, he laid a stumbling-block before the believing Gentiles; giving them occasion to think and judge, that Christ alone, received by faith, was not enough to justification and salvation; unless they did also come in to live as the Jews, after *Moses's* law.

Hereupon, *Paul* (who had a very clear knowledge in the mystery of Christ and the gospel) did exceedingly blame *Peter*, for this his uneven walking; and tells him,

that by thus doing, he committed a greater error than he was aware; for hereby he made Christ the minister of sin. For if Christ, received by faith, be abundantly sufficient, and enough to all christians, both for righteousness, and life, and that without the law; why doth *Peter* bring the Gentiles, that had believed on Christ, back again to the law? Is not this, saith *Paul*, to argue Christ of weakness and insufficiency, and to make him the author and teacher of a doctrine, that leaves men still in sin; it not being able to confer upon them, by itself alone, full, perfect, and sufficient righteousness?

And by reason of this gross mistake of *Peter*, of so dangerous a consequence, *Paul*, according to the wisdom of the Spirit, takes occasion to discourse of that great point of justification, which is the very marrow and substance of the gospel: and he shews, that we must not do the works of the law, thereby to be made righteous; but that we must first be made righteous, ere we can do aright any work of the law. For, as it is not good fruit can make a good tree, but it is a good tree that must bring forth good fruit; so neither are we made righteous by working righteousness, but by receiving righteousness, out of which afterwards we work. And so the law that commands righteousness, but doth not communicate righteousness, can never justify us; but faith, that makes us righteous before we can work righteousness, it is that which justifies us in the sight of God.

Now to this doctrine, *Paul* adds his own experience, to make all clear; which kind of arguing, though it will not satisfy the reason of the world, yet it will satisfy the faith of the saints.

Now, saith *Paul*, for mine own part, I must profess to the Jews themselves, and to all the world besides, that I am so far from seeking righteousness by the law, that I am wholly dead to the law; and, as a dead man,

have no more to do with the law, as that hath no more to do with me. *I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God,* Gal. ii. 19.

I, saith *Paul, through the law, am dead to the law;* that is, the law itself makes me dead to the law. For the law, with its wrath, and curse, and punishments, hath slain me; it hath, through my sin, delivered me up to death and hell, without shewing me any way of escape or deliverance; it hath done against me whatever it could do; it hath fully killed and slain me. And therefore, how can the law any more give laws and commands to a dead man, yea, to one whom itself hath slain? or how can it expect obedience from such a one? And this sense *Chrysostom* gives of these words.

But secondly, we conceive these words in another sense, after this manner, *I, through the law, am dead to the law;* that is, I, through a new law, am dead to the old law; I am dead to the old law (which was the law of the letter written in tables of stone) by a new law, which God hath written in my heart, and inward parts (*i*). And this is the law of grace, or the law of the Spirit of life, that is in Christ Jesus, which is not a law consisting of letters, words and sentences, but is the living word of God, written in our hearts, by the living Spirit of God: according to that of *Paul,* touching believers, 2 *Cor.* iii. 3. *Ye are the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;* and the living Spirit writes a living law. And this law makes us dead to the law; and a man is never truly dead to the law of the letter, till the law of the Spirit of life be written in his heart, by the finger of God. But, when we have the law of grace, which is a living and almighty law in our hearts, we are then safely dead to the law of the letter.

(*i*) η διακονία τε θανάτε ἐν γράμμασι.

The law commands all flesh, that hath not the living word or law of life within itself; but when a believer hath in him the law of the Spirit, the law of the letter hath no more power over him; that is, so far as he is taken up into that other law of the Spirit, but no further.

And there is no danger at all in this doctrine, that the new law makes us dead to, or delivers us from, the old, as ignorant and carnal christians think there is; inasmuch as this new law imprints in our souls the love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity. And he that is thus freed from the law, is the only man that keeps it, and fulfils it, through the law of love, put into his heart by the Spirit. And this law of love doth fulfil the other law, but never breaks and violates it. Wherefore, saith *Paul, I, through the law, am dead to the law.*

That I might live unto God;

That is, He that, through the law of grace, is freed of the law of the letter, is not set free from the law, that thereby he may have opportunity, and liberty, to live to sin, and himself; but that he may thereby live unto God: And when a man is born of God, and lives the life of God, from the nature of God, there is no danger at all in declaring this man to be free from the law of *Moses*, by the law of Christ. For how otherwise should he come to know the high privilege of the gospel, and the excellent prerogative of the sons of God, and the glorious liberty and freedom, into which Jesus Christ hath exalted him?

Now this one thing rightly understood, doth administer to us just cause to reprove two sorts of people, who swerve from the truth in this particular.

The first sort are they who would be dead to the law, that they might live unto sin, and not unto God; who would have no law, that all things might be lawful, though ever so wicked and abominable, and ever so

contrary, both to the light of grace and nature. And these are the true Antinomians and Libertines, who would be free from the law of *Moses*, they not being under the law of Christ; who would take away, and quite abolish, the law of the letter, they not being under the law of the Spirit; and so would be free from all the law, both old and new, both of *Moses* and Christ, that they might live as they list, and take their full swing in all their lusts. Now such libertines and licentious persons as these, are to be restrained and punished by the civil magistrate, and the powers that be of God in the world, when they transgress in any matter, wickedly and presumptuously against their neighbour, and against civil society: and in other things, that are more secret and inward, or that are of their own notions and apprehensions, though concerning the things of God, they are to be left, with other unbelievers and misbelievers, to the righteous judgment of God, who is always present in the world, and immediate moderator and governor himself, in all such affairs as immediately concern himself and his kingdom.

2. The other sort, to be reproved from this point, are such, who are so Jewish and so zealous of the honour of the law, that they will by no means endure to hear, that the gospel of the Son of God comes to abolish it, or that the new law is given us, to make us quite dead to the old. For they think, that such doctrine as this, will open a flood-gate to all manner of wickedness and licentiousness. For such men, being carnal themselves, and knowing no restraint from sin, but the law of *Moses*, do verily think, that if that curb be taken out of the jaws of men, they must needs rush headlong into all manner of evil, as the horse into the battle: and this is true enough, where men free themselves, or are freed by others from the old law, before the new be written in their hearts. But this they understand not, that when

the new law comes, it is a sufficient discharge from the old; since the law of grace within us is infinitely more powerful to keep us from sin, than the law of *Moses* without us; and the love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity, put into our hearts by the Spirit, is infinitely more able to make us do righteousness, and avoid sin, than any outward commands and threatenings whatsoever. And so, where the gospel prevails in truth and power, men need not fear the taking away the law from such men, seeing they, through the *new law, are dead to the old, that they may live unto God.* That, as the humanity of Christ knew no law, but the presence of the Godhead in it, was unto it instead of all law, and it lived unto God by living in God, through union and communion with the divine nature; so the saints, God dwelling in them, and they in God, do by this means live unto God: and God himself, who dwells in them, is the new law according to which they live; they doing all in God, and for God, and so live unto God indeed.

And now it follows,

I am crucified with Christ, &c.

I am crucified with Christ, who, through this new law, was dead to the old. For Christ our brother, of the same flesh and blood with us, having the living word and law of God within him, he owed nothing to the law of *Moses* by way of debt, neither was he justified by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of the eternal Son or word of God, that dwelt and wrought in him, and he again in it. And this living word and Spirit of God that dwelt in the flesh of Christ, was the true crucifying of his flesh; and in this crucifying of Christ's flesh, all his saints partake with him, as *Paul* here saith,

I am crucified with Christ.

Now this cannot be understood of Christ's outward crucifying upon the material cross: for thus, *Paul* was

not crucified with him, neither are all the saints. But this is to be understood of Christ's inward and spiritual crucifying, through the word of righteousness and life that dwelt in him; and according to this, all the faithful, through all ages, are crucified with him indeed.

And here it will be needful to speak something more fully, both touching Christ's own crucifying, and the crucifying of all his saints with him, on the same cross. And the rather, because, as men generally, in the outward church, have a carnal understanding of all the things of Christ, so also of his cross and death. And not the *Papists* only, but many among ourselves, who greatly adore the outward cross and crucifying of Christ, are yet ignorant of the true cross and crucifying of Christ, and his christians with him, whereby they are truly crucified and dead to themselves, to sin, to the world, and to whatever is not God himself: And so, under the open profession of the outward cross and death of Christ, do live in all manner of sin and wickedness, equally with the very heathen, amongst whom the name of Christ hath not been named. Wherefore, to remove this gross ignorance from all that love the light, I shall speak something, first of Christ's own crucifying, and then of our crucifying together with Christ.

1. *Of Christ's own crucifying.*

Now Christ's true crucifying; (I mean, his inward and spiritual crucifying, in which all his saints, without any exception, have their fellowship with him,) it was this: It was the taking up his human nature into his divine nature, or the taking up his flesh into the word, in such sort, that the flesh of Christ did not live the life of the flesh, in the reason, and understanding, and wisdom, and will, and affections, and desires, and delights, and ends of the flesh; but the flesh, or humanity of Christ, being crucified, and dead to all these things, did live, in itself,

the life of the eternal word, in the nature, righteousness, life, mind, will, and in all the things of God. And this was the full and perfect crucifying of the flesh of Christ indeed.

And thus you see, that the living word and Spirit of God, which dwelt in the flesh of Christ, did truly crucify and destroy the proper will and affections, and the whole life of his flesh.

And thus was Christ crucified, before his crucifiction on the material cross; and his outward crucifying was but a sign of what was done before, within; and if Christ's flesh had not thus been crucified before, his cross, he had not afterwards given it up so freely, cheerfully, and desirously, to be crucified so shamefully, painfully, and bleedingly on the cross.

The divine nature of Christ, was the constant cross of his human nature; and his human nature was fully crucified in his divine; in such sort, that the human nature of Christ had not the least freedom of its own proper will left to itself; but when it was to undergo the heaviest and bitterest things that any creature was capable to undergo, even death and hell, and the sense of the whole wrath of God; yet even then he said, *not my will, but thine be done:* Which was the most full and perfect crucifying that could be. For the man Christ lost all his own things in God, through immediate union with God, and was filled again with all the things of God, in his humanity; which took away his humanity wholly from itself, to God, to be, do, and suffer, all in the will of God; and this was his crucifying.

And this now, is the most excellent and glorious crucifying of Christ, that is to be preached to all nations, for the obedience of faith. For to preach the outward crucifying of Christ, barely and alone, without this inward and spiritual crucifying of him, (which is not only the original, and the cause, but also the perfection and glory

of the other) is no great matter; neither will it make the world much in love with him, seeing two thieves were thus crucified with him, at the same time, outwardly, as he was. But to preach Christ, crucified by the living word and Spirit of God, that dwelt in him, through which he was wholly dead to himself and the world, and lived wholly in the will of God; so that, though he were the Son of God, yet he made himself of no reputation, but gave up his flesh, and outward man, to be crucified among thieves, at the will of his Father. This, I say, is the glorious crucifying of Christ, which the gospel preaches in all the world; even the crucifying of Christ's flesh, by the Spirit and divine nature. For Christ's dying had been nothing, if the life of God within him had not offered up his human life; and his crucifying had been nothing, if God in Christ had not humbled his human nature to the death of the cross; and he had not offered up that flesh of his to God, without fault, by his eternal Spirit, as *Paul* speaks: *Heb.* ix. 14. But this did put such an infinite worth, excellency and efficacy, on his outward crucifying, and thereby he is said *to redeem us unto God, even by his blood; and by that one offering of himself, to perfect forever them that are sanctified:* Heb. x. 14.

And thus much touching Christ's own crucifying; the next thing is,

Our crucifying with Christ.

I am, saith *Paul*, *crucified with Christ;* that is, with that human nature of his, that was taken up into the word. Now as the most excellent crucifying of Christ, was through the word and Spirit that dwelt in him; so likewise, the true and glorious crucifying of all the faithful, is through the same word and Spirit of Christ, dwelling in them. For to have the word and Spirit of Christ, that is, the Word and Spirit that is true God dwelling in us, is the greatest crucifying of flesh and blood that can be. And when we are thus crucified with Christ,

by his word and Spirit dwelling in us, then afterwards, the body will be ready and willing to suffer the cross, or fire, or lions, or racks, or torments, or any thing; as we see in the blessed Martyrs; who, if they had not been first crucified with Christ, through the word and Spirit would never have delivered up their bodies so readily as if they had not known them, to suffer so many grievous and intolerable things for Christ. For that flesh that is truly crucified by the Spirit, is fitted for all sufferings, though never so grievous and intolerable to itself.

Wherefore let us learn, that no outward sorrows, or tribulations, or prisons, or rackings, or killings, are such real crucifyings to a believer, as his faith, hope, and love, the fruits of the word and Spirit in him, which will not suffer him to live in himself, or in the creature, but do carry him with great force, out of all these things, to live in God; which thing is the greatest mortification and crucifying of the flesh, that can be.

And as Christ's outward crucifying on the cross, without his inward crucifying by the word of God, had been nothing worth; no more would all the sufferings and martyrdoms of all the believers in the world, be of any worth in themselves, or of any account with God, without this inward spiritual, daily and constant crucifying, suffering and martyrdom of theirs. Seeing nothing doth so truly and thoroughly restrain, hamper, mortify, crucify, kill and destroy the flesh, and all the corruptions, lusts and affections of it, as the living word and Spirit do. And this is the glorious cross of the church, the body, as well as of Christ, the head; without which, all martyrdom is nothing; and of which, all the bodily sufferings and torments of the saints, have been butademonstration to the world for the glory of God, and for the comfort, support and encouragement of other christians. And where this inward crucifying hath not been first wrought and accomplished, christians could suffer

nothing outwardly; as hath been very evident in many christians, who, having, in times of persecution, been called forth to witness to the truth with their lives, have at first, for fear and dread of the outward cross, abjured the truth to save their lives. But afterwards, when the word and Spirit within them, had fully and truly crucified them, they would then come forth again of their own accord, and willingly offer up their bodies to fire and death.

And thus also I have declared what is our crucifying with Christ; *Paul* saying here, *I am crucified with Christ;* because his sins were subdued, and his nature conquered, through the living word and Spirit of Christ dwelling in him.

Now, that both these things are so in truth, and that they are no fond notions, speculations, and glosses of my own devising, I will yet make it more evident by some few other plain scriptures; as by that of *Paul*, in *Rom.* viii. 10. where he saith, *If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin;* that is, the presence of Christ, that is, the living word of God within us, is the killing and crucifying of the body to all sin. And in *Gal.* v. 24. the same apostle saith, that *they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts of it:* and in *ver.* 25. he shews, that this crucifying of the flesh of christians, is not brought about by any outward sorrows and sufferings, but by the presence of the Spirit in it, saying, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit:* and in *ver.* 16. of the same chapter, he saith, *This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;* and *Rom* viii. 13. *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.* So again, *Rom.* vi. 5. *If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* Now all believers, without exception, are planted with Christ,

into a likeness of his death; which is not so to be understood, as if all should be crucified on a material cross, as he himself was; but that all of them are *buried with him by baptism into his death;* that is, by the baptism of the Spirit; and the baptism of the Spirit, is the death of the flesh; it is the death of our flesh with Christ's: for thus was Christ's flesh made dead to itself, to sin, and the world, to wit, through the baptism of the Spirit; and thus also is ours: wherefore *Paul* adds, *ver.* 6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:* So that it is plain, that the destruction of sin in our bodies, by the living word and Spirit of God, is our crucifying with Christ. And *ver.* 11. the apostle would have those that are thus crucified with Christ, *to reckon themselves dead to sin:* for as the word and Spirit of God in Christ, made him wholly dead to sin, and sin had no place in him: So likewise, as far as the same word and Spirit of Christ prevail in us, they will make us dead to sin for the time past, and present; and for the future will preserve us from sin.

And now we shall make some use of this point.

First then, let us know that it is not enough to salvation, to believe that Jesus Christ, according to his human nature, was outwardly crucified on a cross at *Jerusalem* for us, except we also be crucified with him, through his living word and Spirit dwelling in us; through which we must be powerfully planted into a true likeness of his death, in such sort, that we must be dead unto all sin whatsoever, even to all our own corruptions and lusts, and to all the corruptions that are in the world through lust; and we must be dead to ourselves, to our own fleshly reason, understanding, will, desires, ends, and to our own human life; and we must be dead to the

world, and to all that is in it, and of it; to all the pleasures, profits, and honours of it: we must thus truly be dead with Christ, ere we can live with him. And with this kind of crucifying, must whole Christ be crucified, from the head to the lowest members; and thus also must we be crucified with him, if we will have any part in him; I say, we must have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and be made conformable to him in his death, ere we can attain to his resurrection from the dead.

Now if any desire to know how we may attain to be thus crucified with Christ;

I answer; that the true faith of God's elect, is the only way through which we can attain to this crucifying. For, through faith we receive the living word of God to dwell in us; and in this word we partake of the Spirit; and this word and Spirit dwelling in us, do (as hath been declared) crucify us with Christ.

Indeed, hypocrites and carnal christians, receive and profess a word that will not crucify them with Christ, but do receive a word and doctrine that will still suffer them to live their own lives, and after their own lusts. For the word they receive, is only an outward word, consisting of divers questions, opinions and doctrines; and is also without the Spirit, and so it leaves them as it found them, in reference to their natures and corruptions.

But the word that faith receives, is the word of righteousness and life; a word that is always accompanied with the Spirit: and when this is ingrafted into the soul, and abides in it, it presently mortifies and crucifies it, and destroys a man's self out of himself. And therefore, in 1 *Cor.* i. 18. it is called ὁ λογος ὁ του σταυρου, *the word of the cross;* and that, not only because it exposes us to afflictions in the world, but also because it, dwelling in our hearts by faith, doth crucify us. And this crucify-

ing word, in the same verse, is called also δύναμις Θεοῦ, *the power of God;* for that word that crucifies our flesh, and subdues and destroys the whole strength of corruption out of us, must be such a word, as is also *the power of God;* and so it is not only in itself, but also, because the Spirit of God dwells in it. And this word, thus apprehended, will crucify us with Christ.

Now this word of faith, which is the word near us, even in our hearts, will crucify us,

1. Thoroughly; it will crucify the whole man throughout, and that according to his mind, will and affections; for this word of God *is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and is piercing to the dividing asunder both of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a curious discerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart*, &c. And all the tribulations and torments in the world, yea, all the sorrows and pains of hell, cannot so crucify and subdue our evil natures and lives, as this living word in our hearts, with whom we have to do. This will crucify us till we be dead with Christ, as Christ was dead (which was the fullest and completest death that ever was) that is, till our outward and inward man be wholly and fully subject to the only will of God.

2. This word of faith will crucify us daily and constantly, as *Paul* witnesses, saying, καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, *I die daily:* 1 Cor. xv. 31. For the word of righteousness dwelling in us, is quite contrary to our corrupt nature, and all the operations of it; and doth, without intermission, put forth its strength and efficacy against both. That as, in the first break of day, the light is still mortifying the darkness, till it have wholly dispelled it; so the word of righteousness deals with our corruptions, till their place shall be no more found.

Now, because this our crucifying with Christ is so contrary to the flesh, that the flesh is always mourning under

it, and murmuring against it; therefore for our encouragement in so difficult a work as this, I shall propound some choice and excellent advantages that believers have, by being truly crucified with Christ. For by this means,

1. We are freed from the law. For as the humanity of Christ, being crucified by the word and Spirit, by this means became dead to the law, and the law lost all its power over him; so all the faithful that are thus crucified with him, are, through this crucifying, set free from the law; for their own life being extinguished by the living word and Spirit, and they living in that word and Spirit, a life not their own, but Christ's, are as truly freed from the law, as Christ himself was. And this *Paul* doth plainly teach us, *Rom.* vii. 1. saying, *that the law hath lordship over a man all the time he lives*, and no longer. But when he is once crucified with Christ, and dead with Christ, the law hath no more dominion over him. So then, as long as we live our own life, the law hath power over us; but when we are dead to ourselves, through the life of Christ, we are set quite without the reach of the law; and the law hath no more to do with us, the members, than with Christ, the head.

2. By being crucified with Christ, we are freed of sin. For one of the chief ends of the indwelling of the word and Spirit in believers, is to free them, and save them from sin; and though sin hath its full power in our own human life, yet it hath no power over Christ's life in us, which we live, through faith. Wherefore saith *Paul*, Rom. vi. 6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;* and in *ver.* 12. he saith, *Let not sin therefore reign* ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι *in your mortal or dead body;* which he calls dead, not in reference to the common mortality of the world, but in reference to our crucifying with Christ; and in the body that is crucified

with Christ, sin is not to reign. And so you see, that through our crucifying with Christ, we are dead to sin also. For it is impossible that Christ and sin should live together in strength, in the same flesh; but if sin live in our flesh, it will crucify us to Christ; and if Christ live in our flesh, he will crucify us to sin.

3. By being crucified with Christ, we are freed from death; that death that arises of sin, and carries the wrath of God in it: For through the death of the second *Adam*, we are set free from the death of the first *Adam*, and through that death, to die unto life. Unbelieving flesh is the fuel of death, as wood is of fire: and death reigns, and hath its full dominion in the flesh of all unbelievers; but when we, by faith, are made members of Christ's body, of his flesh and bones, then life reigns in Christ's flesh, as death in ours. And so being crucified with Christ, death hath no more dominion over us.

4. By being crucified with Christ, we are also freed from the power of the devil. The devil hath power over our flesh, or humanity, whilst it is our own, and under the law, sin and death. But when our flesh is united to Christ, and is crucified by the word and Spirit, then Satan comes, and hath nothing in it, as he came to Christ, and had nothing in him. The devil then can find nothing in us to do us harm, or whereby he may prevail against us, when we are truly crucified with Christ.

5. The flesh that is truly crucified with Christ, is only Christ's own flesh. For whilst we live our own lives in unbelief, we are only the flesh of the first *Adam;* but when the living word and Spirit dwell in us, and crucify us, then our flesh becomes the flesh of the second *Adam;* and so far as it is crucified through the word, it is Christ's flesh more than ours.

6. This crucified flesh is the only temple and habitation of God, wherein he dwells, and manifests himself in this world: For as God dwelt in Christ's flesh, which was thus crucified, and made it his temple, so he dwells in the crucified flesh of believers, and makes that his temple: as *Paul* saith to believers, *Ye are the temples of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* And God dwells in none of the flesh of all the sons of men, but only in that which is crucified with Christ; and that flesh that is not thus crucified is not God's habitation, but the devil's.

7. This crucified flesh only, keeps the true christian Sabbath, or the everlasting rest of the new world; which is, to cease from our own works, and to do the works of God. Whereas, that flesh that is alive to itself, and lives its own life in itself and the creatures, never enters into the true rest, nor keeps the true sabbath; but it always works its own works, and doth all things from itself, and for itself, and so long God will not use it. But when the flesh is crucified through the word, then God doth all in it, and takes it out of its own life and works, into his life and his works. And the more any flesh is crucified with Christ, the more doth God delight to use it, and to work his own excellent works by it; for such flesh will render no resistance to God in his working; and also, it will do the works of God, merely for the glory of God, and the good of his brother, being dead to all self ends and interests.

8. This crucified flesh only, is able to endure the will of God, and to suffer for his name. For, till the flesh be crucified with Christ, and killed by the word, it will suffer nothing for God, but will, by all possible means, avoid the cross; but when it is truly crucified, it will endure the greatest evils that can be inflicted on it, either by men or devils, or by the Lord himself; and that with

much willingness and cheerfulness. As we have seen in Christ the head, and believers the members, what grievous things they have suffered for the name and truth of God, in their crucified flesh; and as this crucified flesh will suffer any thing for God, so it will suffer it aright; that is, first, In obedience to God; as Christ laid down his life, not by necessity, but willingly. Secondly, *In meekness and patience; as Christ, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed his cause to him who judgeth righteously.* And thirdly, In love, and that to very persecutors, so as to pity them, and pray for them. This is glorious suffering indeed! and no flesh can suffer thus, but this crucified flesh.

9. This crucified flesh, as it is able to suffer all things, so also to overcome all things. That flesh that lives its own life, is soon certainly conquered by all the evils that assault it; but when it is crucified with Christ, it is also quickened with him to overcome all things. So Christ, who was thus crucified by the word; though he seemed to the world, in his death and cross, to be quite vanquished; yet even then he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed openly over them; yea, and overcame all things, in that crucified flesh of his. For that flesh that is crucified by the word and Spirit, is thereby made superior to all things, in that exaltation and might, which the word and Spirit communicate to it.

10. This crucified flesh hath the very glory of Jesus Christ upon it; and no flesh is so glorious in the church, as that which is most crucified with Christ; for in that, you shall see little of itself, and most of Christ; little of the first *Adam*, and most of the second. Look among all the sons of God, and you shall see them that were most crucified with the word, most glorious; the clear beauty of holiness being seen upon them: whereas, that flesh that

lives much in itself, in its own wit, will, reason, prudence, mind, affections, and the things of its first nature, though there may be something of Christ in it, yet all these things are so much uncomeliness and deformity upon it, and are nothing but a thick vail and covering to obscure Christ himself. But that christian that is most dead and crucified to these things, he it is that shines most gloriously in the kingdom of Christ.

Lastly, This crucified flesh is the only subject of the glorious resurrection. For, as the living word and Spirit, that crucified Christ's flesh, did again raise up that crucified flesh of his from death, and set it at the right hand of God; and thereby did plainly manifest him to be the Son of God; so the same word and Spirit that crucifies our flesh, shall as certainly raise it up with Christ, into the fulness of the life and glory of God. And this time, the apostle calls *the day of the manifestation of the sons of God* For the word and Spirit, while they dwell in us, and crucify us, they make it only known to us, and to them that live in the same faith and Spirit with us, that we are the children of God; but when they shall raise up this flesh of ours (which they have first crucified) from death and the grave, into the life, glory and eternity of God, then it shall be manifest to all the world, that we are his children.

And so our crucifying with Christ, is a certain pledge of our resurrection with him; and this the apostle testifies, *Rom.* viii. 11. saying, *He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwells in you:* and *Rom.* vi. 8. *If we be dead with him, we believe we shall also live with him.* If we be dead with him, that is, through the word and Spirit first crucifying our flesh, and then offering it up to death; we believe we shall live with him that very life which the word and Spirit of God did communicate to his flesh, when it raised

him from the grave, and fully translated him into the immediate kingdom of God. And for this cause, *Col.* i. 18. Christ is called the *first-born from the dead;* that is, the first whom the word and Spirit did raise from death and the grave, and did carry into the immediate presence of God, as the first-fruits and pledge of their resurrection, who have the same word and Spirit dwelling in them.

Whence it is evident, that all that flesh, which the word and Spirit do crucify with Christ, they shall also raise up together with him, and sit in the same heavenly places in him; which is the sure hope of all believers.

Now seeing all these things are truth, and are no lie, let us willingly give up ourselves to be thus crucified, how bitter and grievous soever it be to the flesh.

Quest. Now if any man shall say, How shall I know that I am thus crucified with Christ, that I may have interest in all these advantages?

Answ. I answer, There are many trials of this, some of which I will name very briefly, and so conclude this matter.

As first, If thou find thy own nature truly subdued and changed by another nature that is from God; and if thou find thy own life put to an end by another life that is from God; then art thou crucified with Christ indeed.

2. If thou deny thyself in all things of flesh and blood, and find a new self within thee, to have power over thy old self, which is daily withering and decaying at the presence of the new creature; then art thou crucified through the word.

3. If thou be dead to sin, even to all those corruptions and lusts which have delighted themselves in thee, and thou again in them; if thou find thyself dead to

them, and they killed in thee, then art thou crucified by the word.

4. If thou be dead to the world, and to the things of it, which are the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, then art thou crucified by the word.

5. If thou do not mind the praise and applause of men on the one hand, nor their reproaches and indignities on the other hand, but art truly dead to both; then art thou crucified by the word.

6. If thou be deceased and departed from thy own will and works, and canst do, and delight to do the will and works of God; then is his law within thy heart, and thou art crucified by the word.

7. If thou be ready prepared to bear and endure any sufferings and persecutions for Christ with patience, and over and above, with willingness and joy, and dost not draw back for any evils, but dost stand to them and overcome them; then also art thou crucified by the word, and that is, crucified with Christ.

Now this our crucifying with Christ, is the chief and greatest matter that we are to mind in this world; wherefore *Paul* saith to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινα εἰδέναι τι ἐν ὑμῖν, "I did not judge it worth the while to "know any thing among you" (or to behold any thing in you) "*but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" Seeing in this present state of ours, this is our chief business, to be crucified with Christ, and to be taken out of ourselves, and all our own things, till we be altogether reduced to nothing; that we may receive ourselves, and all things anew in Jesus Christ. This is the chief work of God, by his word and Spirit upon the faithful here in this world, as it was also his chief work upon Christ, in the days of his flesh: For though there were in Christ, many clear demonstrations of the presence of God, through which he

wrought many of the great works of God; yet our main business that concerned Christ's life in the flesh, was daily and thoroughly to crucify him by the word and Spirit which dwelt in him; and thereby to prepare him, and make him fit for the outward cross, and for that sad hour, and power of darkness, that was to overtake him. And so this also is to be the chief business of our lives, after we do believe, even to be daily crucified, and mortified, and killed by the word and Spirit of Christ, till our will be perfectly subdued to God's, and by these means, we be fitted and prepared for that tribulation and cross, whatever it is, that the Lord shall please to appoint unto us, either in life or in death.

And thus, having spoken something of the crucified christian, we proceed to speak, in the next place, of the quickened christian, from the following words,

Nevertheless I live.

Every true believer is as well quickened with Christ, as crucified with him; *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.* So that, as the humanity of Christ (which is the first example and pattern to which the whole church is conformed) being deprived of its own proper life, through the word and Spirit that dwelt in it, had instead thereof, the life of the Son of God communicated to it; and that Son of man, having parted with his own proper life out of himself, did yet truly live in the same soul and body, the life of the eternal word; and was so crucified, that nevertheless he lived; so also it is with all christians: And therefore *Paul* saith, out of his own experience, *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live:* as if he had said, "I am not crucified to death, but to life; my crucifying with Christ is my quickening; for by this I am so killed, that I live the more; yea, now only I do truly live, being formerly dead. My own proper life, in myself, was my death; but Christ's life in me is

my true life. For I was dead with the worst death, to wit, in trespasses and sins; but now I live in the best life, even the life of righteousness."

Whence it is manifest, that the living word and Spirit of Christ in a christian, do so kill the life of his flesh (which is a life of sin and sorrow, and darkness and death) that at the same time they communicate to the same man, to the same soul and body, a true and spiritual, and holy, and heavenly, and eternal life.

For no man is crucified with Christ, but he also lives with him; seeing the same word that kills our life, communicates Christ's: and Christ crucifies us with himself, not that he may kill us, but that he may quicken us, and our quickening is the end of our crucifying, and our crucifying is the way to our quickening.

Indeed, the killing of the flesh by the sword or famine, or the law, or any way else, is death indeed, or death unto death; but the killing of the flesh by the living word and Spirit, which is its crucifying with Christ, is death unto life.

And here again we may note this also, that the true life of a christian begins from his crucifying and dying with Christ; and also the true crucifying and dying of a christian begins from his life in Christ. For both these inseparably go together, to wit, our crucifying and our quickening with Christ. But our crucifying with Christ is named first in order, because it is first in manifestation; seeing after we believe, Christ's death is first manifested in us, before Christ's life; though Christ's life be first in us in order of nature; the crucifying of our flesh, flowing from the life of his Spirit.

This, then, is the sum of this matter; that the living word dwelling in us, destroys the proper life of the flesh, and takes up the flesh into the life of itself and the Spirit. And so a man, in union with Christ, hath his own life

destroyed out of him, and Christ's own life communicated to him. So that, in the true believer, the soul and body of man, live in the life of the Son of God, as was done in the flesh of Christ our elder brother.

And thus the flesh lives a life that is not of the flesh; yea, thus the creature lives in itself the life of God. For as that eternal life that was with the Father, was manifested in the Son, that is, in his flesh or humanity, and all believers have seen and known it; so also, that very life of the Father and the Son, is both communicated to the saints, and also manifest in them, as faith very well knows. And this is the great mystery of the gospel; let them receive it that can receive it.

Now this new and spiritual life, which a crucified christian partakes of;

He hath it, 1. In Union. 2. In Manifestation.

First, A christian hath this life in union, when, through, faith of the operation of God, he is really knit unto Christ, and ingrafted into him, and made one with him. For before we are united to Christ, we are without life; but as soon as we are united to him, we have life from him; as *John* saith in his epistle, *he that hath the Son hath life;* (even that life which the Son hath) *and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.* Now this life and union which a christian hath through faith, is more hidden and secret, as that life is that proceeds from the first real union and compliance between the stock and scion or graff; and this is the life of justification. For as soon as ever we are, by faith, made one with God in Christ, the righteousness of God is made ours, truly and everlastingly; and in this we are justified, even before God.

2. A true christian hath this life of Christ, not only in union, but also in manifestation. For when a christian partakes of Christ's life by faith, this life will not be idle in him (which is against the nature of all life, but

especially of this) but most active and operative ; and it will manifest itself especially two ways, namely,

Both in Holiness and Comfort.

1. This life will manifest itself in holiness, in the very holiness of Christ, which is the holiness of the divine nature communicated to the human nature; the Spirit itself, which is given to a believer, as the outgoing of the life of God within him, worketh its own works of grace and sanctification in him, and communicates the same holiness to him, a member, as to Christ the head, though in a far different degree.

2. This life of Christ in a christian, will manifest itself in comfort as well as in holiness. And this is the life of our life, and the next and necessary result of holiness; wherefore it is said, that the kingdom of God stands first in righteousness, and then presently in peace and joy; and the same Spirit that is given for a sanctifier, is also given for a comforter : and *Paul* saith, *Romans* viii. that *to be spiritually minded is not only life, but life and peace.* For when a believer finds in himself a new nature through a new birth, and the law of God within his heart, and some strength to obey God, and to do his will, then he begins to find also a sweet and heavenly peace within him, and many times, joy unspeakable and glorious. And thus is a crucified christian's new life manifested, both in holiness, and also in spiritual peace and joy.

And now (to speak one word by way of application) let us, each one, seriously consider, whether he do indeed partake of such a life as is risen to him out of death? whether he find that he hath parted with his own life, and gotten another life than his own, in his own soul and body? and whether the life of the first *Adam* be crucified in him, and he live the life of the second *Adam?* that is, not a natural, but a spiritual life; not a human, but a divine life; not an earthly, but a heavenly life ; not a

temporal, but an eternal life: for thus do all live that are truly crucified with Christ. And I desire we all would the rather mind this; because if we part with this life ere we partake of that, the second death, which is everlasting death in sin, and the wrath of God, must needs swallow us up; and because, if we do not partake of Christ's life here, we can never live with him in his kingdom; and also because we can never have true and immediate communion with the Father, but in the life of his eternal Son: Wherefore let all such whose hearts God hath touched by his word, make it their business to seek from God in Christ another life than their own; a life infinitely better and stronger than their own: and a life, which, at the will of God, will offer up their own: that we may say in our experience, as *Paul* in his, *We are crucified with Christ yet nevertheless we live.*

Now the apostle, having named this blessed life, doth further enlarge himself on this matter in the words following, saying,

Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

And this he speaks, lest any one should think that the life he lived after his crucifying with Christ, was only his own human life, purified and refined. I say, lest any one should think he lived now the life of his own refined and spiritualized reason, and judgment, and prudence, and will, &c. distinct and apart from Christ; therefore he adds, *Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.* And each of these clauses are very considerable.

Yet not I.

I live, yet not I. By which words it may appear, that a christian is so crucified with Christ, that in this crucifying he loses not only his own proper life, but (which must needs follow) his personality also. For through faith, his soul and body live no more any proper life of their own, as before, but are taken up into the nature

and person of the Son of God; and in him he subsists, lives, and acts as a member in the man, and as a branch in the vine; and so can truly say, after faith is come, *I live, yet no more I*, but it is another that lives in me, and I in him; so that a true christian, through faith, doth lose his personality, not his humanity; for his nature lives, but not in his own person, but in the person of Christ.

Indeed every man by nature, and according to his first birth, is a distinct person by himself, and lives a proper life of his own, in and by himself, till faith comes and knits him unto Christ; and then he subsists in Christ's person, and is no more a person distinct by himself; so far as he is gathered up into Christ, through faith and the Spirit, and lives and acts in him. For then Christ is made so one with a christian, and a christian with Christ, that there is no more distinction between them in this unity, than there is between the head and a member.

Now the knowledge of this point, through the experience of faith, is of excellent use to a christian in the matter of his salvation.

Inasmuch as each man, as he is a distinct person by himself, is under the law, and appertains to the kingdom of the devil, and is within the reach and power of death and hell; but as he is taken into Jesus Christ by faith, that is, as he is taken into his person as his member, and loseth his own person, so he is free from the law, sin and death, as Christ is free. So that, if the law, sin, death, or the devil, come to a believer, to accuse, terrify or condemn him, he (because of this most real and near union with Christ) may reply in truth, and say, "It is not I; I am not I, I am through faith become a member of Christ, and I am he, and he is I; and if you have any thing to say, say it to the person himself, for I am but a member, and do live in his person."

The clear and spiritual knowledge of this matter, would be a great support to us in all times of temptation, and in all deep sense of sin and wrath; seeing we commonly, in such sad and painful hours, do look upon ourselves as persons by ourselves, and distinct from Christ; and then we do truly both fear and feel sin, and death, and hell within us; and then also the devil, and our own evil consciences, are too mighty for us, when we consider ourselves in ourselves. Wherefore, at such times we must needs prevail by faith; and know that we, through faith, are not persons by ourselves, but that we are parts and members of Christ, and live in his person, and consequently in so near union with him, that Christ cannot be saved without us, nor we perish without him. And so none can lay any thing to our charge, but what Christ hath taken upon himself, and overcome for us; and so the law, sin, death, hell and devil, can as soon prevail against Christ as against us, who are so joined to him, that we are one flesh and Spirit with him.

It is true, if we were persons by ourselves, these evils and enemies would be too hard for us; but being drawn unto Christ by the Father, and being by him also implanted in Christ, and made branches of that vine, and members of that person, we thus become one with him who is conqueror of all things, and we ourselves also are more than conquerors in him.

Wherefore let us all know, that in the matter of our adoption, justification, sanctification, and of our whole salvation, *Prorsus abjicienda est persona*, as *Luther* saith, "We must wholly cast away our own person," and be united into one person with Christ, yea, and lose our person in his; seeing out of this union Christ profits nobody, either to the escaping sin and death, or to the obtaining righteousness and life.

Wherefore, for the escaping these eternal evil things, and for the obtaining these eternal good things, we must necessarily be so taken up into Christ, that we may say with *Paul, It is no more I.*

Yet not I.

And here I must needs note one thing more, ere I conclude this matter, and that is this;

That a believer must be so taken up into Christ by faith, that as Christ must work all in him, so he must attribute all Christ's works unto Christ, and none to himself; still saying, in the midst of the exercise of all graces and virtues, *It is not I.* It is not I that live, but Christ himself that lives in me this life of grace, righteousness, wisdom, meekness, goodness, humility, patience, power, love, &c. It is not I that live in myself, but Christ that lives it in me; as he saith elsewhere, *I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that dwelleth in me.*

After the same manner, as every christian must keep his rest in Christ, and must suffer Christ to work all his own works in him, so he must still attribute all Christ's works unto Christ, and be still saying, *It is not I, but Christ in me* that hath done these works, that hath endured and overcome these evils.

And thus must we keep our sabbath in Christ, as Christ kept his sabbath in God. For Christ was so taken up into God, and filled with him, that he said of his humanity, *I can do nothing of myself;* and again, *The Father within me, he doth the works;* and again, *The words I speak are not mine, but his that sent me;* and so Christ, in all his great works, said, *not I, but the Father in me;* so we, in all our works that are truly spiritual, must say, *not we but Christ in us.* And this only a mortified christian can truly perform; for others will be

attributing the works of Christ to themselves, rather than to Christ, and be glorying in themselves more than in him. It follows,

But Christ lives in me.

For, lest any should think that *Paul* had a new habit of life created in him, he adds this, that we must know it was Christ himself within him that was his life, even that word of life, and Son of God, that made the world and no created habit of life. That as that word that was with God, and was God, and dwelt in the humanity of Christ, was that very life of his humanity; so the same word of God dwelling in us through Christ, is also our life, as it was his. And as the body hath no habit of life in itself, distinct and apart from the reasonable soul; but the soul itself that dwells in the body, is the life of the body; and when the soul withdraws, the body is dead, and hath no habit of life in itself afterwards; so the life of a christian doth as immediately flow from Christ, as the life of the body from the soul; and if Christ should withdraw, all spiritual life would leave him, and the second death would swallow him up. And as the very presence of the soul in each member is the life of it, so is Christ's presence in all his members, their true and very life. Wherefore *Paul* saith here, *Christ lives in me*, as God lived in Christ, and as the soul lives in the body.

And so, as *Paul* had affirmed before, *That it was not he that lived*, so here he shews who it was that did live in him, and that is Christ;

Christ lives in me.

Indeed the soul and body were *Paul's*, but *Paul* did not live in his own soul and body, but Christ himself did live in them; and so *Paul* lived the life of another in himself, the life of Christ in his own soul and body; and the soul and body of *Paul* were but a temple in which

Christ lived more than himself, as the humanity of Christ was but a temple in which God lived more than himself.

So that it is Christ himself that lives in a true believer, and he is, and doth, and suffers, and overcomes all in him.

Now, that we may not mistake in this great matter, we must rightly understand what this Christ is that lives in a believer: now this is not the flesh of Christ; for that being a creature, and in all things like unto our flesh, sin excepted, can be but in one place at a time; but this Christ is the *eternal word, and Son of the living God*, the power, wisdom, and righteousness of God, and the true God and eternal life. This is the Christ that lived in *Paul*, and lives in every believer.

Now if we rightly understand this point, we may learn from it many excellent things.

And first we may perceive the mistake of those who look for all the life of Christ in that humanity which was born of the virgin; whereas Christ truly lived in *Paul*, and lives in all the faithful, and his very life is to be seen in them; as the life of the soul is not confined to the head, but disperses itself through all the members, and is manifest in them in measure, as in the head in fulness.

2. We may learn that Christ in a believer, is to him instead of all created habits of grace. Christ, who is the true God, is all in all in a christian; and so a christian partakes of that righteousness which is Christ; of that wisdom which is Christ; of that power, truth, goodness, &c. which is Christ; and Christ that dwells in believers, is truly all grace to them. And herein they are like unto Christ's humanity, unto whom the fulness of the Godhead that dwelt in him, was instead of all created grace. Wherefore let us know, that the created habits of grace in a christian, which the schoolmen have invented and

taught, and others have received from them, are nothing but the empty notions and vain speculations of carnal and unbelieving hearts, ignorant of the true mystery of the gospel. For Christ, that lives in a believer, is all grace to him; and thus the apostle *Paul* expressly teacheth in 1 *Cor* i. 30. where, speaking of Christ, he saith, *He is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption;* and so a christian hath that wisdom, righteousness, &c. which is Christ himself. And this grace, which is Christ himself, is infinitely more high and holy, than all created habits of grace; and this is the only grace that is acceptable to God, and that makes us accepted in itself; and this is the only grace, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; and the only grace that can make us meet for the Father's kingdom. And thus you see that Christ, that lives in a believer, is all grace in him, and all-sufficient grace for him.

3. If Christ live in believers, then certainly, whatever evils, and tribulations, and persecutions, are brought upon believers by the world, and the false church, for the word of faith, they are brought upon Christ himself, and Christ himself is still persecuted in the flesh, throughout all ages and generations; and the faithful in all ages are filling up the remainders of the sufferings of Christ in his body. For believers have all along suffered, and do still suffer from the world, because *God is in them of a truth;* and the evil done to them is against God himself, who dwells in them. And against this rock have all the unbelievers dashed themselves in pieces all along.

4. Christ, who lives in believers, lives in them like himself, that is, like the Son of the living God; and so those in whom he lives,

1. He frees them from their own evil things, and
2. He confers upon them all his own good things.

1. He frees them from their evil things: and in reference to these, he lives in them as their Redeemer and Saviour; and so Christ within them abolishes the law, takes away sin, and destroys death; for none of these things can dwell in his presence, in that soul wherein he lives. For he is our new law, to make void the old; and he is our new righteousness, to take away sin; and our new life, to destroy death; and the law, sin and death, can have no place nor power, where Christ our new law, righteousness and life, dwells and lives.

2. Christ, living in believers, confers upon them his own good things; for Christ, the Son of God, hath nothing in himself, that is in his divine nature, which he will not communicate to our flesh, as he hath done to his own, according to our place and use in his body; and so he communicates to all those in whom he dwells, of all the things of God, till at last he fills them with all the fulness of God. And thus is Christ glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe.

5. If it be Christ the true God that lives in believers, then we learn hence what true justification is; and that is, to be so one with Christ by faith, that Christ himself may live in us, and we in him; that he may communicate his nature to us, and our nature may be taken up into his; for we cannot be justified before God by our own living, but by Christ's living in us his own life; and his righteousness, which is the righteousness of God, must dwell in us, ere we can be justified before God.

Lastly, Seeing Christ himself lives in all true believers, let us all, who profess ourselves to be such, so live, that Christ may be seen to live in us, more than ourselves; that they that have known us, may know us no more, but may know Christ in us; and that they that have communion with us, may acknowledge Christ himself speaking, working, and living his own life in us, in all

self-denial, humility, holiness, love, resignation of ourselves to the will of God, and in all diligence to do the work of God, and readiness to suffer the will of God; for thus Christ lived in his own flesh, and thus also he will certainly live in ours, if he live there at all; and when Christ lives in our flesh, as he did in his own, something of his glory will be seen upon us.

Now such a christian, in whom Christ lives, and he lives not himself, how amiable would he be in the spiritual church! but how unlike would he be to all the men in the world, yea, to the most professors in that which is called the visible church! But I proceed to that which follows.

And the life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

And here note, in the first place, that *Paul* sometimes saith, *Christ lives in him*, and sometimes that he lives; *I live*, saith he, *yet not I but Christ lives in me;* and again *the life I live. The life I live*, saith he, of that very life which Christ lived in him. All which shows the near union and communion betwixt Christ and a believer; Christ and a true christian being so much one, that what one doth, the other may truly be said to do.

So that, as God and Christ were so united, that the very works of God in Christ, sometimes were attributed to God, and sometimes to Christ, (as is manifest in divers places in the gospel) and it made no difference whether they were attributed to God in Christ, or to Christ in God. Just so it is betwixt Christ and believers, who are as nearly united as God and Christ, as Christ himself (whom we may safely believe) affirms, in *John* xiv. 20. saying, *In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.*

In that day, that is, when the Spirit is given, and comes into the heart, which makes the true Lord's-day

in a believer; in that day, when the Spirit is the light, whereby we see and know aright all the things of God: in that day, ye shall know this great mystery, which the world, and the worldly church, cannot know, but will be greatly offended at it when they hear it; to wit, *that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* And in *John* xvii. 21. Christ, who was heard in all things, in his last, solemn prayer for his elect church, in the days of his flesh, intreats his Father, that this may be accomplished in all the believers; praying, *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.* From which scriptures we may see and perceive, that as Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him, so believers are in Christ, and Christ in them; and hereupon, the works of believers are sometimes attributed to Christ, and sometimes to them; and it is no matter whether they be attributed to Christ in them, or to them in Christ; seeing it is Christ in believers that is all, and doth all, and hath the glory of all.

Now this use, we who are believers, may make of this; to wit, that it is our duty so to live in Christ, that every part of our life may be attributed to him, and may be such, that Christ may not be ashamed to own it, but that it may be a praise to Christ, he doing all in us, and we doing nothing but in him, and of him, and for him.

And the life I live (εν σαρκι) *in the flesh.*

This *Paul* speaks, to shew that the life he lived after he was a believer, was not out of the flesh, in the religion of angels, in strange raptures and revelations, and in high and wonderful things above himself; but that the life he lived in Christ, and Christ lived in him, was in the flesh, that is, in his human soul and body. There are a sort of people (which also have been professors of the gospel) so deluded by the devil, that they say they live the life of Christ, yea, a life far above Christ in the Spirit,

and that they live immediately in God, and have often visions of, and intercourse with angels, whilst these very people live the life of sin and Satan in the flesh, in all manner of filthiness, and uncleanness, and looseness, and abominable profaneness.

Wherefore Paul, saith *I live the life of Christ in the flesh, in this soul and body of mine:* I live in the flesh, but not after the lusts and requiring of the flesh; but I live Christ's life in my own flesh, in all righteousness, holiness, cleanness, purity, meekness, goodness, love, patience, heavenliness; this is the life I now live in the flesh.

2. Note hence again, that the life of Christ is to fill a christian; not his spirit only, but his flesh; it is to fill his soul and his senses, his inward and outward man; his thoughts, words, works, and his whole conversation; the life of Christ is to fill them all.

The life of Christ is first communicated to the spirit of our mind; there it is first kindled and rooted; and from thence, by degrees, it spreads itself into the flesh; and to this the flesh is most unwilling; but at last the Spirit overcomes the flesh, and leads it forth into its own righteousness and life.

And hence we may learn, that our present natural life doth not hinder us, but that we may live a spiritual and heavenly life, or the very life of Christ in our flesh, if we be true believers: Wherefore *Paul*, elsewhere speaking of believers, saith, *the Father hath quickened us with Christ, and raised us up together with him, and set us in heavenly places in him;* and that whilst we live a natural life according to the body.

So that here, in this present world, we may partake of eternal life, and may live (not in notion but in deed) the life of the Spirit in the flesh, and the life of heaven on earth, and the life of the Son of God in our humanity,

if we do not deprive ourselves of so great happiness through unbelief.

Again, we may learn hence, that the life of the Son of God, is not to be confined only to that humanity that was born of the blessed virgin, which was the head of the elect, but that it extends itself to all true believers, in whom Christ lives as his own flesh; as *Paul* saith, *Christ lives in me, even in my flesh;* which, through this life of Christ in it, became Christ's more than *Paul's*. So that the life of the Son of God is communicated truly to all the faithful, and is to be seen in their flesh in some measure, as well as in his in all fulness; as the life of the soul in a man is not confined to the head, but disperseth itself to all the members, and is truly manifest in them.

I live through the faith of the Son of God.

Here the apostle shews the way or means how Christ came to live in him, and he in Christ, and that is through faith.

Christ, saith he, so lives in me, that yet I live in the flesh; but the life I live in the flesh, is not the life of the flesh, but *I live in the flesh the life of faith in the Son of God.*

Now, touching this excellent grace of faith, much might be said; but I shall endeavour to give you the sum of all in as few words as may be.

And first, I shall shey you, that the right faith is not any work of ours, but it is wholly the work of God in us: And therefore it is called by *Paul*, Col. ii. 12. *Faith* της ενεργειας του Θεου *of the operation of God*, and that according to that mighty power, which he put forth in Christ, when he *raised him from the dead;* as the same apostle speaks in *Eph.* i. 19, 20. It was a work of the mighty power of God, to unite Christ's human nature to the divine, though it were wholly free from sin; but it is

a greater work of power to unite us to God in Christ, who are full of sin; and yet God doth this through faith in all true believers, as I shall shew in the next place.

2. As faith is wrought in us by God, and is his constant work in us, so this faith doth apprehend God in Christ, even the divine nature of Christ in the human; and the Son of the living God in the son of man, as the apostle shews here, saying, *I live by the faith of the Son of God:* Shewing that the chief thing that faith respects and apprehends in Christ, is the Son of God. And *Peter*, in 1 *Pet.* i. 21. saith, that the faithful, *through Christ, do believe in God, who raised him from the dead:* So that that only is true faith, which doth apprehend and receive the true God in Jesus Christ.

And thus, from these two things, we may in some measure understand the true nature of faith, which is nothing but this, the Father's laying hold on us by his Spirit, and drawing us to the Son, and enabling us to receive the Son, and so making us one with the Son, to abide and live in him for ever. So that, through true faith, we have the nearest union and conjunction with the Son of the living God, that any creature can have, next after the humanity of Christ.

Now from this union, which we have with the Son of God through faith, do flow many excellent advantages to believers; some of which I shall name now; as,

1. Hereby they are made the sons of God; as *John* saith, *John* i. *As many as received him*, that is, the Word that was with God, and was God, and was made flesh; as many as received him by believing, to them *he gave power to become the sons of God.* As that Word, or Son of God, coming into the humanity of Christ (which was in all things like ours, sin excepted) gave it authority and power to become the Son of God; so the same Word coming unto us, through Christ, gives us power to be-

come the sons of God in him, as the fire gives the iron in which it dwells, power to be light and heat.

And so through faith, we have not only the name, but also the nature of sons. For faith, uniting us to Christ, changeth us into a new nature, and takes from us what we are in regard of sin, and makes us what Christ is in regard of righteousness; and so it makes us new in heart, mind, will, affections, ends, and in our whole conversation; for it brings God's nature into ours, and this changeth our nature into its own likeness; so that whatsoever we do, or whatever our condition in the world is, we shall still carry ourselves in all things as the children of God, in some demonstration of the divine nature.

2. Through this faith in the Son of God, we are made, not only sons, but "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ:" that as Christ, according to his human nature, being made one with the Son of God, *by whom, and for whom all things were made*, was in him made heir of all things; so we, through that faith whereby we receive the Son, are made heirs with Christ, in such sort, that *all things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are ours* whilst we are Christ's, 1 *Cor.* iii. 21. as all is Christ's whilst he is God's. Now this is a very glorious inheritance, which, as faith only apprehends, so faith only understands.

And this inheritance happens to us, not through the works of the law, that is, not through any outward works of outward righteousness whatsoever, but through the righteousness of faith, through which faith we are truly made one with the Son of God in Christ (as hath been said) and in and with him, do truly inherit both God and the creature.

3. This true faith, carrying us into the Son of God, and placing us in him, to abide in him, doth truly carry

us out of the utmost reach of all evil things; out of the reach of the law, sin, death and hell, seeing these can have no place nor presence in the Son of God; and though these evils may reach us whilst we dwell in ourselves, yet we are got out of their reach, so far forth, as by faith we dwell in him.

4. This right faith carries us into the Son of God, and doth carry us into all his perfections and excellencies, into his nature and life, and wisdom, and power, and glory, and into all the fulness of the Son of the living God; and so true faith enriches a believer in Christ, with greater treasure than the heart of a carnal christian can possibly give credit to; for through faith we are carried into the Son of God, to have all that he hath, and he again comes and fills us with all that he is and hath.

5. True faith carries us into Christ, and makes us one with him, as the author and original of all our good works. For through this, God dwells in us, and works his own works in us; and we again dwell in him, and work his own works in him; and those only are true good works, which God, that dwells in us, works in us, and which we, dwelling in God, work in him.

Yea, a believer who is one with Christ, not only doth good works, but doth them continually; for Christ in him is always active; and whilst he is in Christ, he must be always active: and therefore, saith Christ, *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*, John xv. For, through this mutual abiding of Christ and a christian in each other, a christian as naturally and as necessarily doth the works of God, as the fire burns, or the sun shines.

And these are some of the advantages a christian hath, through *faith in the Son of God.*

By all which we may perceive, that true faith is a greater matter than the most are aware of. For men

usually think, that when they hear the gospel in the outward ministry, and assent to it that it is true, that this is faith, and that then they do believe; but the true faith of God's elect is a greater matter than this; for through that we are truly made one with the Son of the living God, and do abide and live in him for ever. And so this right faith is a most high and precious grace, and is the first manifestation of the Father's eternal love to the soul, and the first grace whereby we have entrance into the kingdom of God: it is the Sabbath of Sabbaths; it is the greatest and highest worship of God; it is infinite and everlasting righteousness; it is the mortification of the flesh, the quickening of the Spirit; our mighty victory over the law, sin, death, hell, the world and the devil; it is the first and last, and all in all, in the kingdom of the Son: And he that believes, as the scriptures have said, is already truly passed from sin to righteousness, from death to life, and from Satan to God.

So that right faith is a most precious grace, and is found in very few of the common professors of the worldly church; so that Christ himself makes this question, *The son of man, when he comes, shall he find faith upon earth?* And therefore it concerns all to inquire and try, *Whether we partake of this faith or no?* And *whether the life we live in the flesh, be in the faith of the Son of God?* otherwise we must know, that *as he that believes shall be saved, so he that believes not shall be damned.*

THE

STUMBLING-STONE,

OR A

DISCOURSE

TOUCHING THAT OFFENCE WHICH THE WORLD AND WORLDLY CHURCH DO TAKE AGAINST

CHRIST HIMSELF.	HIS TRUE CHURCH.
HIS TRUE WORD.	HIS TRUE GOVERNMENT.
HIS TRUE WORSHIP.	HIS TRUE MINISTRY.

WHEREIN THE UNIVERSITY IS REPROVED BY

THE

WORD OF GOD.

DELIVERED PARTLY TO THE UNIVERSITY-CONGREGATION IN CAMBRIDGE, AND PARTLY TO ANOTHER IN THE SAME TOWN.

TOGETHER WITH

A brief touch in the Epistle (for the present) on the late quarrelsome, weak and erroneous Animadversions of one Mr. *Chambers*, called Doctor in Divinity, and Pastor of *Pewsy*, in *Wiltshire*.

BY WILLIAM DELL,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AND MASTER OF GONVIL AND CAIUS COLLEGE, IN CAMBRIDGE.

Mihi plane omnium jucundissima facies ista in rebus est, videre ob verbum Dei studia & dissentiones fieri; is enim est verbi Dei cursus, casus & eventus; nam dicit, non veni pacem mittere sed gladium. *Luther.*

TO THE READER.

HERE I present thee with this discourse, which met with such notable opposition and contradiction from the university of *Cambridge*, to whom it was delivered; and also from such of the town then present, who are baptized into the university spirit; and yet every point of this doctrine will appear, to spiritual men, to be the word and truth of God, and if need shall require, I can yet more fully prove it to be so, by the scriptures of the prophets and apostles, and by the doctrine of Christ himself, the head of both; and that against, not only one, but all universities, and also against the gates of hell, and powers of darkness. And by this gross opposition against the plain gospel, thou mayest judge and discern that this university, which hath been counted one of the eyes of the nation, SEEING SEES NOT; and which hath been counted a fountain of knowledge and Good learning, HEARING HEARS NOT, NEITHER UNDERSTANDS; whereby we may conceive that gray hairs are upon it, and that the time of its departure is near, except it REPENT.

I had thought also at this time to have given a farther testimony for Jesus, against the mystery of iniquity which hath hitherto prevailed in the ecclesiastical state, and in the universities, the head and heart of it, but that this work under my hands, multiplied into too great a proportion for an epistle; and also because I intend to add thereunto my testimony against that mystery of iniquity which hath hitherto also prevailed in the civil state, antichrist having, with his deceivableness of unrighteousness, seduced and deluded both, ever since the reign of *Constantine;* and this twofold testimony (through grace given, and hoped to be given) I intend very shortly to publish; for I judge it most necessary for the true church to

be acquainted herewith, especially after so many of the seals have been opened; and also, seeing the time of the restitution of all things makes haste upon us, and we hope is even at the doors. Wherefore we continually entreat that the arm of the Lord would awaken, and put on strength; not only as in ancient times, and in the days of old, but more also, to wit, as his Spirit, by his prophets hath foretold he will do in the last time, when he will reveal his arm for Christ and his seed, in his greatest might and glory: And let the remembrancers of the Lord not keep silence, till the cursed kingdom of antichrist, with all its religion, works, duties, doctrines, counterfeit law and gospel, false clergy, false church, false power and jurisdiction or discipline, false ordinances, and false all things, be utterly overcome with the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and till the true spiritual church, that through faith, hope and love, lives out of this world, and the elements thereof, in the kingdom of God's dear Son, be made an eternal excellency, and the joy of generations; and till they who have afflicted it, and domineered over it, be made to come humbly bending to it, and to lick the dust of its feet, as the Lord hath promised.

Farther, I thought good at this time to advertise thee of the animadversions of Mr. *Humphrey Chambers*, called Doctor in Divinity, and Pastor of *Pewsy*, in the County of *Wilts*, on a discourse published by me, intitled, *The crucified and Quickened Christian.* In which Animadversions (as he calls them; after Mr. *Christopher Love's* example, who was one of his forerunners in this opposition to the truth) he hath, Doctor-like, contradicted the manifest truth, and the very substance, marrow and mystery of the gospel, which being made void (which yet is impossible as to the true church) there would be neither true righteousness, nor life, nor redemption, nor salvation, nor

the true Christ, nor the true God in Christ, left remaining to believers; all which I make account, in due time, to make appear by the scriptures; (for I allow no doctrine that is not according to the doctrine of Christ, and the writings of his apostles and prophets, which are a most sure and infallible word, if they be understood according to Christ's mind, and not according to man's.)

Now when I read those Animadversions, I found them very captious, slight, weak, and grossly erroneous, and somewhat like the Animadversions of the *Sorbonists* on some of *Luther's* writings; and this hath not been my judgment only, but also it hath been represented to me from godly and understanding christians, that this great undertaking of this Doctor, is judged such by them, that it deserves no more refutation; his Animadversions, compared only with the discourse itself, being sufficiently for ever already confuted by it. And truly I cannot but bless God, who hath given his truth so weak an enemy, and error and darkness so weak a patron.

But by this the true church may judge also, what a sad ministry these poor nations have received from antichrist's ordination, when the chief doctors, the very *Scribes* and *Pharisees* among the clergy, do not know the very first principles of the gospel in any spiritual light, or by any teaching from God; but all their cold, faint, and uncertain doctrine, they scrape from fathers and schoolmen, and from other ordinary systems of divinity; without any presence of faith, or anointing of the Spirit: whereby all their doctrine becomes carnal and corrupt, and contrary to Christ's mind, and agreeable to antichrist's; so that I cannot choose but conclude with *John Hus*, THAT ALL THE CLERGY MUST BE QUITE TAKEN AWAY, ERE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST CAN HAVE ANY TRUE REFORMATION (*a*).

(*a*) Joan. Hus libr. de vita & reg. antichrist. cap. 37.

Another thing hath happened in this matter, which makes me wonder, and that is this, that those few shreds of weakness and error, published by Mr. *Chambers* should be so honourably licenced by so famous a divine, as the present Vicechancellor of *Oxford* (*b*), a man of such excellent learning and judgment; but truly, such doctrine deserved such a licence, that something at least might make it considerable; whereas the true doctrine of Christ, the word of faith, the word of the kingdom, hath a standing licence from Jesus Christ, and comes upon the world as the rain and dew, without asking leave of man, or the son of man (*c*). But great places are greatly dangerous to those whose faith is not stronger than their form; and so I leave this also to the wisdom and judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, into whose hands God hath given all things.

Christian, acquaint thyself much with the word of God, and be much in the prayer of faith, for some of the angels are preparing to sound the last trumpets, and to pour out the last vials on the very seat and throne of the beast; and we hope, ere long, to hear that shout of triumph in the spiritual church, "*Babylon* is fallen, is fallen, is fallen," and is now become the habitation of devils, and unclean spirits, which before was the habitation of hypocrites and false christians, yet covered over with all the most glorious shews of religion and holiness, that the deceivableness of unrighteousness could put upon them. And now (if thou please) read on, and let the *spiritual man judge, who judgeth all things.*

WILLIAM DELL.

(*b*) Mr. *Owen.*

(*c*) Prodiit ex adipe iniquitas eorum, transierunt in affectum cordis.

THE

STUMBLING-STONE, &c.

MATT. xi. 6.

And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

THESE words are the conclusion of Christ's answer to that question which *John* the Baptist propounded to him by two of his disciples, himself being in prison; the question was this, *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

Now it is much disputed, whether *John* himself did at this time doubt of Christ, or no: and several men give in several opinions, which I shall not now stand to recite; but almost all, both ancient and modern, do conclude, that *John* propounded this question to Christ, not that he himself did now doubt whether Christ were the true Messiah or no, seeing he had before given so clear a testimony to Christ, that he was *the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world;* and had also baptized him with water; and had seen, at that time, *the heavens opening, and the Spirit of God, as a Dove, descending and resting on Christ;* and had heard the Father's own voice, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:* Wherefore they say, that *John* himself could not possibly, after all this, doubt of Christ; and therefore that he did not propound this question to him by his disciples for his own sake, but for theirs; that they, who before had envied Christ for their Master's sake, and would rather have had *John* to have been the Messiah than him, might now be assured, and fully instructed, touching Christ, from Christ himself: Thus they.

But for my part, I do conceive that *John* did propound this question to Christ for his own sake, rather than for his disciples; for though, when he lived in peace and freedom, he had a clear revelation from the Father, touching the Son, by the Spirit, and had accordingly clearly spoken of Christ to others; yet now, being in prison and bonds, and near unto death, he is brought, by great tribulation and temptation, to doubt of all that truth which before he had been taught of God, and even to question whether Christ were the true Christ or no? For, thought he, if he be the true Christ, why doth he not send redemption to me, who suffer for his sake, but suffer me thus to perish, whilst he might help me, if he be the Christ? and if he work miracles for others, as I hear he doth, why doth he wholly neglect me, who have given such an honourable testimony to the world of him?

And truly, brethren, we know not what place or power the gospel of God our Saviour hath in us, till tribulation come; and so much of the true knowledge of Christ, and of true faith in Christ we have indeed, as we have strength in such hours. That truth which we confess freely in prosperity, we are fain to begin to learn it again in tribulation; and tribulation makes us learn the truth over again the second time; it makes us to learn that in experience, which before we had learned only in doctrine.

And how hard a matter it is to hold fast in trouble, that truth which we well know, and freely profess in prosperity. We may see, not only in *John* the Baptist, (who being in prison, doubted whether Christ were the true Christ, after he had been so clearly taught him by God and his Spirit, and had so plainly confessed him) but also in the disciples of Christ, who, though they had heard all his doctrine, and seen all his works, and had confessed him to be *Christ, the Son of the living God*, yet,

when the high-priests were enraged, and the people in an uproar; and when they beheld the swords and the staves, and Christ was apprehended, and themselves in danger; they were all offended at him, and fled. Yea, we may see it in Christ himself, who, though the Father had testified touching him three times from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. Yet when his suffering drew near, he exceedingly feared, and was amazed and astonished, and on the cross cried out aloud, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

My brethren, no man knows the grievousness and efficacy of tribulation, and the weakness and frailty of human nature, but they who have had experience of both; but this is the comfort of the faithful, that that knowledge of Christ and the gospel which God hath taught us, and we have heard and learned from him, will certainly endure and hold out throughout all the greatest and longest storms of tribulation and temptation, though with much striving and difficulty; but they who have had much knowledge of the truth, and have made a glorious profession of it before men, and yet have wanted the true teaching of God, and true faith through that teaching, such, when tribulations and difficulties have risen up, have quite departed from the truth, and have often renounced it.

We know not, brethren, I say again, what we do believe aright, touching Christ and his gospel, touching the love of God to us, and the remission of our sins, &c. till distress, and tribulation, and death come; and what we are then, we are that indeed; yea, at such times, we are to be judged according to our faith, and not according to our sense and feeling.

Luther was wont to say, "That in temptation he could "hardly make use at all of that doctrine of the free grace "of God to sinners, and of faith in Christ crucified," &c.

which at other times he did preach in much knowledge and utterance. And he said another time, "That if he were "addicted to God's word at all times alike, and could find "such love and desire thereto in his heart always, as he "did sometimes, he should reckon himself the happiest "man in the world."

Now from all these things I conclude, that *John*, being in prison, and being fallen into many tribulations and temptations, did send these two disciples unto Christ for his own cause, and for his own confirmation, as it is said *ver.* 2 and 3.

Ver. 2. *When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,*

Ver. 3. *And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

Whence we are farther to observe,

That *John*, in his doubting, sends to Christ himself, and would not turn aside to the Scribes and Pharisees, to take advice from them, or to demand their judgment.

For true faith, in all doubtings touching Christ, goes to Christ himself for resolution, and will be satisfied from none but Christ.

And Christ is as ready to satisfy *John*, as *John* to inquire and ask; and so he returns him this answer by his disciples.

Ver. 4. *Go, and shew John again those things you see and hear.*

Ver. 5. *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them;* and now let *John* himself resolve his own question, Whether I am the true Christ or no.

Go, shew John the things you see and hear.

Where you see, that Christ doth not say in plain terms that he was the Christ; yea, he often forbad men to say

so; but he would have his works and his word declare what he was, that our faith might have a sure foundation.

1. Christ would be known by his works.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, &c. and so every where in the gospel, Christ would be known to be what he was by his works; particularly in *John* x. 24. when the Jews came round about him, and said, *How long dost thou make us doubt? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*

Jesus thus answered them, *ver.* 25. *I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.*

And *ver.* 37, 38. he saith to them, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

Thus you see, that Christ will be known to be what he is by his works.

For Christ, the power, wisdom and righteousness of God, is a most lively and active principle, and cannot lie hid where he is present and dwells; but when this word was made flesh, that is, came into the flesh, it did manifest itself to be in that flesh, by doing the works of God; and without the works of God, the presence of the eternal Word in the flesh of Christ had not been known. Wherefore Christ is called God manifested in the flesh, and not hidden; and he was manifest to be God in the flesh, by doing the works of God.

And as Christ is known by his works, in himself the head, so also in the church his body; for wherever Christ's presence is, there also are his works; and where his works are not, there neither is his presence.

If Christ be present in our hearts by faith, his works will be undoubtedly manifest in our lives.

Now if any shall say, But it is not necessary for every christian to do the works of Christ here mentioned, to wit, to *cause the blind to see, and the lame to walk*, &c.

I answer, yet however, there are other works of Christ besides these, which are inseparable from his presence, as the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, together with the self-denial of Christ; the meekness, lowliness, goodness, long-suffering, heavenly-mindedness of Christ; as also his readiness and diligence to do the will of God, and his cheerfulness to suffer it; these works, I say, every one ought to perform that is a christian, that so Christ may still be known by his works; as the apostle saith, *Shew me thy faith by thy works:* that is, let me know the presence of Christ in thee, by the works of Christ.

And thus is Christ known by his works, both in himself and in his members. And thus much touching the works of Christ in general.

Now, for the kind of the works which Christ did, as, to give eyes to the blind, and strength to the lame, &c. It is to be noted, that they all are such works as the prophets had foretold the Messiah should perform when he came into the world, as *Isa.* xxxv. 5. Behold, God will come and save you: *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:* And he that did these things, thus foretold by the Spirit, must needs be the true Christ; and these works were a demonstration of the efficacy of his unction.

And thus Christ doth here describe himself by his own proper works, as one whose business, employment and kingdom, lies with the poor, lame, blind, and all sorts of diseased, afflicted, sorrowful and distressed persons; and these poor creatures he doth not neglect and despise; but his proper office is among these, and these he com-

prehends in the greatest love, and pities with the tenderest bowels, and minds and tends with the greatest care and diligence, and relieves, and helps, and saves them perfectly.

Whence first we learn, that Christ's kingdom brings good to all, but it receives nothing from any body; for it carries in it all the unsearchable riches of God, and stands in need of nothing that man can do. Wherefore it entertains not the rich, and full, and noble, and honourable of the world, and such as abound already, and have enough in themselves and the creatures; but only the poor, and needy, and afflicted, and desolate; and it supplies these freely and richly, and sends the other empty away. And this is the true nature of Christ's kingdom.

Secondly, Seeing Christ, in his proper office, hath only to do with the poor and afflicted people, we may learn to make a right judgment of Christ, that is, that our Lord Christ is such a sweet Saviour, that in him is nothing but love, and mercy, and goodness, and compassion, and kindness to such as are in distress, and in grievous fears and agonies from the sense of sin and wrath, and from the presence of death and hell working in them. And we must believe Christ to be such an one as the gospel represents him, that we may come to him with comfort, and put our whole trust in him, in all times of sin and sorrow, and in all hours of darkness and temptation; and let us never entertain any other thoughts of Christ than these, but let us hold him unchangeably for such an one as the gospel reveals him, whatever the law, or our evil consciences, or the devil shall suggest to the contrary; and then, in all our distresses, we shall not be afraid of Christ, as of a severe lawgiver, and an inexorable judge; but may run to him as to our merciful and powerful Saviour, whose proper office is among the afflicted.

And thus we see that Christ is known by his works, and what kind of works they are.

Secondly, Christ would be known by his word.

And as Christ is known by his works, so also by his word; and therefore he saith, *Go, and shew John, the things you see and hear;* and the things you hear, as well as the things you see, and that is, that *the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

For Christ's works and Christ's word do always go together. Christ's life is always accompanied with Christ's doctrine, and his works with his word.

The best works that any man can do, without the word of the gospel accompanying them, are not Christ's works; and the most glorious word that any man can hold forth, without the works of Christ accompanying it, is not Christ's word; but Christ's works and Christ's word go always together, both in himself the head, and in the true church his body. Wherefore Christ saith, *Go, shew, to John the things you see and hear:* the things you see; *the blind receive their sight,* &c. the things you hear; *and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

Now the gospel is the free promise of God, in which nothing but mere love, mercy and grace is offered in Jesus Christ to them that believe, though they be never so great and grievous sinners in themselves. And nothing is more joyful than this to the soul that is under the sense of sin and wrath; and he that receives this word of grace by true faith, doth not weigh a feather all the terrors of law, sin, death and hell. So that all the outward works of Christ are a small matter, if compared with the gospel.

Now this gospel is preached to the poor, that is, to the poor in spirit; and these are such, who do not love, nor desire, nor delight in present things, but are so afflicted and oppressed in their hearts and consciences, with the sense of sin and wrath, that they regard not the

world, nor the riches, pleasures and honours of it; but all they mind or care for, is Jesus Christ, and in him the love of God, and the remission of sin, and the gift of the Spirit. These are the poor to whom Christ preaches the gospel, and they only regard and entertain the gospel; whilst the lovers of this world, and the lovers of themselves and this present life, care not for it.

And thus is Christ known, by preaching the gospel to the poor. *Moses's* ministry was full of wrath, terror, and death to sinners; but Christ's ministry holds forth nothing to the greatest sinners in the world, that are sensible of sin, but the free grace and mercy of God to them, even to them, in pardoning their sin, and giving them righteousness; and by this word, Christ is well known to the whole true church of God.

And as Christ is known by his word in himself the head, so also in the church his body; for wherever Christ is present, there is his word as well as his works; and where Christ's true word is not, neither is his presence there. Wherefore all the faithful, as they have received the gospel themselves, so they hold forth the same gospel to others upon all opportunities; according to the covenant which God made with Christ, touching his seed, which is mentioned, *Isa.* lix. 21. *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth,* (that is the gospel) *shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds, seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* By which scripture we may learn, that the ministry of the New Testament is a common ministry, belonging equally and alike to all the seed of Christ, that is, to all true believers; for when Christ dwells in their hearts by faith, who shall hinder Christ in them, from speaking the word of God by them?

For God doth not consider men as the world doth, to wit, as they are tradesmen, or gentlemen, or scholars, or clergymen, but he considers men as believers, or unbelievers. And if they be unbelievers, then are they destitute of the true presence of Christ, and of the true word of Christ, whatever their outward condition be in the world; yea, though they are scholars and clergymen; and if they are believers, then have they Christ's true presence and word with them, whatever their outward condition is in the world, yea, though they are gentlemen or tradesmen; and every one of them saith with *David*, and with *Paul*, *I believed, therefore have I spoken.*

So that we are not to conceive of the spiritual church, according to any outward state or condition in the world, but according to faith, through which Christ dwells in the hearts of believers; and if Christ, the living word of God, dwell in them, he will not keep silence.

And this confession of the word before the world, Christ requires of all believers alike, saying, *He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father, and before his angels;* and there is no true and right confessing Christ, without holding forth the word and doctrine of the gospel.

So then, every one that is of God, speaks God's word; and he that speaks it not, is not of God; for in all the true children of God, the Spirit of their Father speaks in them. And thus the true presence of Christ is known, by the word of the gospel in the church his body, and in every one of his members, as well as in himself the head. This doctrine, the carnal church is a great enemy to, and will not suffer Christ to speak by whom he pleaseth, that so all men may be necessitated to hear its clergy, whether they speak the word of Christ or no: But of this, more hereafter.

And thus you have seen, how Christ gives forth himself to be known by his works, and by his word; and without these two, we can have no certain testimony of him in the world.

Now Christ, having returned this full and satisfactory answer to *John*, to declare to him who he was, adds this in the conclusion,

And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

For notwithstanding the works and word of Christ, which are the works and word of God in the flesh, yet the wisdom and prudence of the flesh, and the religion and righteousness of the world, which do not much regard those things, do find much matter of scandal and offence in Jesus Christ; wherefore Christ saith, *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Now in discoursing, touching the offence which is taken against Christ by men, I shall observe this order; I shall shew,

1. Who they are that are offended at Christ.
2. What those things are whereat they are offended, and why they are offended at them.
3. What a great evil it is to be so offended.
4. What a great blessedness it is not to be so offended; and,
5. Make some use of all.

1. Point.

Who they are that are offended at Christ.

And here I affirm, first, that the whole world in general is offended at Christ; for they, living without the word and Spirit of faith, must needs be offended at Christ, by all those scandals which are raised up against Christ by the devil and men; and they all, having a false apprehension of Christ, do suck in as readily as a spring doth water, whatever, aspersions and reproaches are raised against him, and so must needs be offended at him; and therefore saith Christ, *Matt.* xviii. 7. *Wo be to the world*

because of offences; for offences must needs come, and the world will needs receive them, and therefore, *Woe be to the world.*

So that the whole world, that is, whosoever are not true believers, and born of God, are all offended at Christ and his gospel; and all the children of the first *Adam* are offended at the second *Adam*, who is wholly unlike to them, yea, and in all things most contrary to them.

2. Yea secondly, Not only the common people of the world, vulgar and contemptible men, are offended at Christ, but also all the chief and choice men of the world, kings of the earth, and rulers, and judges, and magistrates, as in *Psalm* ii. and all the best, and learnedest, and wisest, and greatest, and most honourable men, these all are offended at Christ. 1 *Cor.* ii. 8. *Which none of the princes of this world knew;* he means it of philosophers as well as of secular powers; and not knowing him, they crucified him.

2. Not the world only are offended at Christ, but also the worldly and carnal church, the outward, visible, national church, this is very much offended at him. This we see in Christ's time, that the only visible church of God in the world, the church of the Jews, (for the church of the Old Testament was a visible church, but the church of the New Testament is a spiritual church, and not visible) I say, the Jewish church, which had the law of *Moses*, the prophets, and the *Psalms*, and observed all the outward ordinances of God exactly, they were all offended at Christ, and made an order, that whosoever acknowledged him, should be excommunicated, and cast out of the Synagogue.

And this offence was foretold by *Isaiah*, viii. 14. where he saith of Christ, *And he shall be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both houses of Israel; for a gin, and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* So that

not *Babylon* only, but *Jerusalam;* and not the Heathen only, but both the houses of *Israel,* were offended at Christ; and this makes the evil yet more grievous.

And yet this is not all; but secondly, and not only the carnal christians, but the carnal clergy are offended at Christ; and not only the common people of the national church, but the chief rulers, the most eminent, and in appearance, most godly and holy, and orthodox of the clergy, are above all others most grievously offended at Christ. This also we see done in Christ's time, when the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people, men of great reputation and renown for religion and righteousness, these were chiefly, and above the rest of the church, offended at Christ; and as Christ every where was most sharp against them, and did most reprove them, so they did most bitterly oppose Christ. And this also was foretold by the Spirit of prophesy, *Psalm* cxviii. 22. *The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner:* this rejected stone, is Christ himself; and these builders, were the chief rulers and governors of the church; and accordingly, both Christ and the apostles applied this scripture to them, as you may see *Matt.* xxi. 42. and *Acts* iv. 11.

So that the builders that teach, and instruct, and govern the church, and are reputed the best, and most profitable and necessary men in it, yea, the very pillars of the church, so that all would come to nought and to ruin without them, these are the men that are most offended at Christ.

These are the husbandmen mentioned by Christ, *Matt.* xxi. that conspired against the Son of the Lord of the vineyard, and killed him; and these have been, and still are *(d)*, the chief and great outward antichrist in the world.

(*d*) Nullus est alius antichristus in mundo, neque venturus quam Sacerdotes. *Jo. Hus.*

Now when the people see the rulers and governors of the church, who are thought to have more knowledge, learning, light and religion than others, offended at Christ, this exceedingly increases their offence; and when they see the builders rejecting, and throwing away this stone, this causes them to reject him also with the greater indignation.

And thus you see that this offence at Christ, is a great and a large evil, and is spread over all the world and worldly church, and very few there are who do escape it.

And this for the first thing.

2. Point.

At what things in Christ they are offended, and why they are offended at them.

Now the world and the worldly church are offended,

1. At Christ Himself.
2. At his true Word.
3. At his true Worship.
4. At his true Church.
5. At his true Ministry.
6. At his true Government.

Of these things I shall speak in order, according to the good hand of God with me; and shall desire to be so faithful to Christ, as not to depart one hair's breadth from his truth, though it may be, it will come to pass that all, or the greatest part of you, will be grievously offended at it.

I begin with the first, and will shew, that the world and worldly church are offended,

1. At Christ Himself.

And they are offended at him in many respects, of which I shall mention these five.

1. They are offended at the meanness of his outward condition in the world. For indeed he was in a very low plain, simple, and contemptible condition, in the days

of his flesh, as any ordinary tradesman in this town, and lived with *Joseph*, in his trade of a carpenter. Wherefore *Paul* saith of him, *Phil.* ii. 7. that he *made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:* that is, he was in the outward condition of any ordinary man in the world.

Now this mean condition of Christ did much offend them; for, thought they, is this the Christ, of whom all the prophets have spoke such glorious things? whom all the Jews expect? and who is the desire of all nations? Is this he whose name is *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and judgment, from henceforth and for ever?* Is this plain ordinary man the Messiah? How can this thing be? For they thought that the true Christ, of whom such excellent things were spoken, should be some great prince, or learned priest; and that that form of a servant, and mean condition in which he was, could in no measure agree, or be suitable to the true Christ; and for this cause, they were greatly offended at him, and thought him not worthy to be in any place of reckoning.

2. They were offended, that he, being in so mean an outward condition, *John* Baptist should yet speak such high things of him, and he of himself. *John* Baptist testified of him, that he was the *only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father; the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world;* the fountain of the fulness of all the saints; the beloved Son, into whose hands the Father had given all things; and that *he that did believe in him, had everlasting life; and he that did not, should not see life, but the wrath of God should abide on him,* &c. and these all were wonderful things, to be spoken of one whose outward condition in the world was so plain and contemptible.

And as *John* had spoken these things of Christ, so Christ every where gives forth himself as the Son of God, and said, *He and his Father were one.* And this exceedingly offended the Jews, as you may see *John* v. 18. *The Jews sought to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but also because he had said, God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* And *John* x. 31. *The Jews took up stones to stone him, and said, We stone thee not for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* And so they were all offended at this mystery, *God manifest in the flesh,* in the flesh of so mean and despicable a person in the eye of the world.

3. They were offended at Christ, because in him was no human or worldly thing, which any natural or carnal man could possibly like of, or delight in; he exercised no worldly wit, wisdom, reason, learning, parts, nor any thing that might commend him to the world; neither did he live in any outward forms of religion or worship, which might commend him to the carnal church. There was nothing in him but the presence and manifestation of God, the word of God, the righteousness of God, the nature of God, the Spirit of God, the works of God, and God was all in all in Christ; and God is wholly contrary to the world, and the world to God; and so the world and worldly church were wholly offended at Christ, he being altogether in the Father, and the Father in him, in such sort, that the Father in him spake all the words, and did all the works, and he could neither do nor speak any thing of himself; he was taken up unto so near union and communion with God.

4. They were offended at the reproaches and misreports that went commonly abroad touching Christ, raised, for the most part, by the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the church, because they knew, and were assured, that Christ's prevailing would be their undoing; therefore

they gave out that he was a sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, an unlearned and ignorant man, and that made him err; a vicious man, a glutton and winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; and that he had a devil, and was mad; these were the common reports that were commonly divulged abroad touching Christ, and that by the teachers of the best repute in the church; and the common people reckoned them to be very true, and thereupon were horribly offended, both at Christ's doctrine and works.

And thus was Christ a very sign to be spoken against, which *Isaiah* foreseeing in the Spirit, speaks thus in the person of the offended Jewish church, *Isa.* lxiii. 3. *He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* And Christ himself, by the prophet, complains of this usage, saying, *They laid to my charge the things that I knew not;* but yet these false reports so far prevailed, that he became a *stranger to his brethren, and an alien to his mother's own children.*

5. They were offended at him because of his bitter and shameful cross and sufferings; and herein lay the height and depth of that offence, for which the world and worldly church look at Christ. For the ecclesiastical power condemned him as a deceiver and blasphemer, and they also prevailed with the secular power to condemn him as a seditious person, an enemy to *Cæsar*, and a rebel; and so, after all the works of God which he had done, and works of God which he had taught, they at last crucified him between two thieves, by the common consent of all the people, and destroyed the Son of God, as if he had been the son of perdition: And in all this bitter suffering, no body afforded him the least pity or compassion, but the common people mocked him, and

said, *he saved others, but cannot save himself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

And this usage Christ complains of to his Father *Psalm* xxii. 6. where he saith, *that he, by his cries, had no deliverance,* which yet others, who had trusted in God, obtained; but, saith he, *I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people; all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he delight in him.* And *Isaiah* saith, that by reason of this strange suffering of Christ *many were astonished at him; his visage was marred more than any man's and his face more than the sons of men;* and through this suffering of Christ, all the world were so extremely offended, that Christ crucified, was to the *Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*

And thus was, and is, the world and worldly church offended at the true Christ, whom the scriptures hold forth. Indeed, the false church have fancied to themselves such a Christ as flesh and blood can like of well enough; a Christ fashioned after the mind, and will, and wisdom, and prudence and righteousness of man; and such a Christ they extol and magnify, to wit, for their own worldly advantage sake: as the Papists have fancied the poor virgin his mother, who kept *Joseph's* house, and provided his diet, and laid her hands to the performance of his ordinary household affairs, to be a gallant lady, and have clothed her in silk and sattin, and rich attire; and such a mother of Christ they do highly esteem; whereas the poor virgin, the true believer, who lived in the plain and laborious employment of a family, they would even scorn to regard such an one: No more will the carnal church regard or value the true Christ, in his mean condition and marred visage.

And thus much for their offence at Christ himself.

2. The world and worldly church are offended at Christ's true word;

Because Christ, under the New Testament, hath given forth a new word, which is the word of the gospel; and this also they are offended at in many respects; as,

1. Because it is the word of faith; the word of faith, and not of sense; the word of faith, and not of works. For this word of faith is wholly a spiritual word, and hath nothing in it that is suitable to flesh and blood; nothing in it that pleaseth the fancy, or reason, or understanding of man; it hath nothing in it wherein a natural or carnal heart can take pleasure, but is throughout a word of faith.

2. They are offended at the new word of the new Testament, because it exalts Christ alone, and in him the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and the righteousness of God, and the things of God; and cries down all the things of the world, in which men trust and delight, and all the common religion and righteousness of the world, and makes Christ all in all, and God in Christ, and all other things nothing. So *Paul*, 1 Cor. i. preached to them that did believe, *Christ the power of God, and Christ the wisdom of God*, and nothing else.

3. They are offended at this word, because it cannot be learned as human arts and sciences can, to wit, by the teaching of man, together with their own pains and endeavours, but only by the teaching of God and his Spirit, as it is written, *They* (that is, the true children of the spiritual church) *shall be all taught of God; he therefore that hath heard and learned of my Father, cometh to me.* "All my divinity (said *Luther*) consisteth in this, "that I believe that Christ only is the Lord, touching "whom the scriptures speak: and neither my grammar "nor *Hebrew* tongue taught me this, but it is the work "of the holy Spirit."

Now when God teacheth us his word himself, we have another understanding of it than other men, who hear and read the same outward words, and yet want that inward teaching; for then have we the spiritual meaning of the word, and the very mind of Christ in it, which others want, that are not so taught; and this offends the carnal christians grievously, that the spiritual christians have another knowledge and understanding of the word than they; whereupon they thus break out, "What, say they, "are you the only men who have the word of God, and "is all wisdom and knowledge comprehended in your "breasts? and do you know more of the mystery of "Christ, than the grave and learned men who have stu- "died the scriptures all their life? and will you, with your "pretended teaching, overthrow that orthodox sense of "the scriptures that we have had so many years?" And thus they are greatly offended.

They are offended at this word, because it discovers the wickedness of the world and worldly church, at a very high rate. The world doth not seem the thousandth part so wicked any where else, as it doth where the gospel comes. For where this clear light of God shines, and the word comes in any degree of truth and power, there, not only the wickedness of the world appears out of measure wicked, but also the religion, and righteousness, and works, and duties of the carnal christians, are manifested to be gross hypocrisy, and the deceivableness of unrighteousness, and wholly contrary to Christ, the righteousness of God, and so nothing else but a more plausible way to death and hell.

Where the word of Christ, or the gospel of God comes in power, there many who before seemed very godly and religious people, and very good christians, and very quiet and peaceable men, do presently become full of wrath and rage, and cursed enmity against it; and call it error,

and heresy, and blasphemy, and so do no less than spit in the very face of the truth and gospel of Christ, which he hath manifested above all his name; and no man could ever have imagined they had been such children of the devil, before the word came.

And thus, by the coming of the word in the spiritual sense and doctrine of it, many that did once seem to be Christ's friends, are manifested to be his utter enemies. And this also was foretold by *Simeon*, Luke ii. where he saith, that by the coming of Christ in his word, *the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed*, and then that unbelief and enmity against Christ, that before lay hid, is discovered and brought forth by the preaching of the word as we have seen heretofore, and still see by daily experience; and for this cause also they are offended.

5. They are offended at the true word, because every where so few entertain it, and embrace it: as when Christ himself preached, there were very few in all *Judea* and *Jerusalem* that entertained his doctrine; and though sometimes many thronged to hear him, yet at another time they were so offended at this doctrine, that they all forsook him; so that Christ said to the twelve, *Will ye also go away?* John vi.

Now this makes many to be offended at the true word, that when it comes to any town or people, the far greater part should reject it, and speak evil of it; and they, for the most part, the greatest, wisest, and most learned men; and that only a few poor and contemptible people should receive it; this also exceedingly offends.

6. And lastly, they are offended because the true word of Christ, where it comes in any evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, brings troubles, tumults, stirs and uproars in the world, according to that of Christ, *Matt.* x. 34. *I came not to send peace, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter*

against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. For the true word of Christ, is such a sword as cuts in sunder all natural and civil relations, and takes away the peace of any place where it comes in power. Christ saith also, *I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?* Luke xii. 49. This fire that Christ sends is the word, in the ministration of the Spirit, of which the Lord saith by the prophet, *Is not my word as fire?* And this word comes to burn up all the corrupt manners, fashions, customs; yea all the lusts and sins of the world, and all the antichristian doctrine, and forms of worship in the outward church. And when this fire begins to burn any where, presently all the people are in an uproar, and lay all their heads, and use all their hands together to quench it.

So that, wherever the true word comes, the *heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against it, and say, Let us break these bonds in sunder, and cast away these cords from us;* which no flesh and blood, especially the rich, wise, learned, and honourable, would endure to be bound in.

Now this exceedingly offends; for they say, before this kind of word came in, all things were better and more quiet: Under episcopacy all things were well and in good order; but since this new doctrine came in, all things are full of trouble, mischief, wars and death; and therefore they reckon this word the cause of all the evils we have and do endure.

But yet the cause of all these tumults are not truly in the word, but in the world, and in the devil. Christ will have his christians to publish his word, and thereby to gather together his elect unto him: now the world and the devil, the prince of it, will not suffer this to be done quietly, and hence arise all tumults. The devil,

who hath the first possession of the world, would have all things quiet, that he might keep his possession; but Christ will not suffer it to be so, but he will have all those whom his Father hath given him, out of the devil's possession, by the might and efficacy of his word; but the devil will not endure that this should be done quietly, but stirs up all the world against the word.

And so wherever the word comes in truth, there are always troubles and uproars; but where the word is preached, and the world is quiet, that for certain is not the true word of God.

Wherefore the dull and drowsy divinity of synods and schools, cannot be the true word of Christ, for that meets with no opposition and contradiction at all from the world, or worldly church; it meets with no enemies and avengers amongst them, but it is rather praised and embraced, and honoured with degrees and scarlet; and the professors and publishers of it are in credit with men and worldly powers, and receive from them riches, honour, and quiet life; whereas the true doctrine of Christ can never be published without the offence of the world.

And thus much for their offence at the true word of Christ.

3. They are offended at his true worship.

For Christ, under the New Testament, hath instituted a new worship, and this the world and worldly church are also greatly offended at.

Because this worship is wholly spiritual, and hath nothing carnal in it, but consists altogether of grace and truth, according to that of Christ (*e*), *John* iv. 23. *The hour cometh*, saith he, *and now is, that the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father*

(*e*) De instituendo cultu notanda est hæc regula, sine Spiritu Sancto non est suscipienda ulla ratio, aut modus colendi Dei. *Luther in c. 35. Gen.*

seeketh such to worship him; God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth, and there is no worship in truth, but that which is in Spirit. And *Paul* saith of true believers, *Phil.* iii. 2. we are the *circu cision, who worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

Now this spiritual worship stands in faith, hope and love *(f)*. whereby our old nature is mortified, and we bring forth spiritual fruit unto God, and to our brother. And this worship of the New Testament being wholly spiritual, is free from time, place and person, as all spiritual things are; and so at all times, and in all places alike, this worship may be performed by all persons alike, who are true believers; and so accordingly do all true believers, at all times, and in all places alike, believe in God, and trust in him, and fear him, and love him, and delight in him, and speak good of his name; and also do good to their brother, in instructing, teaching, exhorting, comforting him, and helping him as freely as Christ hath helped them; and this is the chief, and indeed the only true worship of the New Testament.

For the gospel hath taught us that Christ is the true temple, wherein the church of the New Testament, which is a kingdom of priests, are all alike to worship God, without any difference or distinction of persons; and also, that Christ is our rest as well as our righteousness; and it is as great a sin to make another rest than Christ, as it is to make another righteousness than Christ; for in him alone we are compleat, and furnished to all things that appertain to the kingdom of God; and stand in need of nothing out of him: Wherefore it is said, *Heb.* iv. 3. *He which hath believed, is entered into the rest*, that is, into

(f) Cultus Dei principaliter & vere consistit non in externis operibus, sed in fide, spe & dilectione Dei. *Luth. in cap.* 25. *Gen.*

Christ and his righteousness; and so hath *ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

Now the world and worldly church are greatly offended at this spiritual worship; and that first, because it makes no great show, and presents no glorious outside to the world, to win their favour and applause, and so they despise it as a notional or melancholic thing.

And secondly, because this is wholly out of the reach and power of the natural man; and no man, by his free will, or natural abilities, can attain thereunto. Wherefore they are offended at this kind of worship, and would have a worship in the days of the gospel, after the manner of the worship of the law; a worship standing in outward works, and duties, and ceremonies, and in observation of days, times, places, and persons; and much scandalize that worship, which stands only in faith and love, and makes void all other things.

4. They are offended at the true church of Christ.

Because Christ, under the New Testament hath set up a new church, which is not outward and visible, as the church of the Old Testament was; neither carries in it any worldly pomp, power, and glory, as the church of antichrist doth, but is wholly spiritual and invisible, and as utterly unknown to the world, as Christ himself.

The true church, under the new law, is the congregation of spiritual men gathered together; not in one outward place, but in one faith, hope and love, in one Spirit, in one Christ, in one God.

It is the company of the faithful and elect, which have Christ for their head.

And this church is not known by any outward orders, or forms, or ceremonies, or manner of life, but only by the word of faith; seeing this true spiritual church is conceived and formed, is brought forth and brought up, is fed and clothed, is strengthened and adorned, is pro-

tected and perfected by this word of faith alone; yea, the whole nature, and life, and being, and action of this church, is in the word of faith.

2. They are offended at this church, because it is the habitation of God, and his very kingdom, wherein he himself is present, is manifested, speaks, works, reigns, is glorified, and is all in all in it; and so it will not receive unto itself any thing of the power, wisdom, and righteousness of man. They are much offended to hear that this church is the *temple of the living God*, and that God hath said it himself, *that he will dwell in them, and walk in them;* and that *God is in them of a truth*, and not by fancied habits of created grace; and that *they are filled with all the fulness of God:* and that they are living stones in that building, wherein Christ himself is the chief corner stone; and that they are all built together by the Spirit, to be the habitation of God: This doth so exceedingly offend them, that is, causeth them to blaspheme, in crying out against this doctrine of the Spirit of God, as blasphemy.

3. They are offended at this new church of the New Testament, because it will be the church of God alone, and will not acknowledge any to be of it but such as are born of God, and have obtained like precious faith with them; and so will have no constant communion with any (how skilful soever in the letter of the word, and how eminent soever in outward forms of religion) but only with such who have *true fellowship with the Father and the Son in the Spirit.*

4. They are offended at this church, because usually, God calls unto it, not the great, and honourable, and wise, and learned; but mean, plain, and simple people: according to that of *Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 26. *You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath*

chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are. So that this true church consists of a small company of poor, mean, simple, base and despised men, in the eyes of the world and worldly church; yea, of such, who in their judgment, deserve to have no place nor being in the world; and who, now, out of their own choice, would willingly join themselves to such a congregation?

5. The great and worldly-wise people are much offended at this church, because of its outwardly afflicted condition in the world, it having fellowship with Christ in all his sufferings; and so is always reproached, despised, slandered, torn, spit on, buffeted, crucified and mocked; and from all, most, or some of these sufferings, the spiritual church is never privileged in the world: and by reason of these things, the visage of the true church seems foul, deformed, and offensive in the eyes of men, whilst the national and carnal church is highly favoured, esteemed, and preferred itself, and hath its chief teachers honoured with scarlet and furs; so that, if Christ were on the earth again, in his mean and plain condition, he would be ashamed to own them, and they would be as much ashamed to own him. And thus much for their offence at the true church.

5. They are offended at the true government of this church.

Because Christ, under the New Testament, as he hath set up a new church, so also he hath set up a new government of this church; and this also offends in many respects.

1. In that Christ will have none brought to his church by outward violence and compulsion (*g*), though he have *all power in heaven and in earth;* but in the day of his power, that is, of the gospel, he only entertains the willing people, and compels no body against their wills; seeing he seeks not his own profit, but ours: Our Lord Jesus Christ gathers his true church on earth, according to the counsel and mind of his Father in heaven, and so will entertain none but whom his Father draws.

2. They are offended at his government, in that, in his true church, he makes an equality between all christians through faith; and will have none over one another, but will have all to serve one another in love; and so he will have him that would be the greatest, to be the least of all; and him that would be the chief, to be the servant of all; as himself came not *to be served, but to serve and to give himself a ransom for many:* And he was greater than all the children of God, not through any worldly greatness, lordliness or dominion, but through his teaching, and instructing them, and loving them, and serving them, and suffering, and dying for them: And besides this greatness, there is nothing but equality in his church.

3. They are offended at his government, in that Christ doth nothing in his church by the decrees or constitutions of ecclesiastical men, or by the secular arm and power of the magistrate; but he doth all by his word and Spirit, and nothing else: and these alone, without the addition of any thing else, are infinitely sufficient to do all that Christ would have done in his kingdom.

4. In that he will have *us to love our enemies, and to do good to them that do evil to us, and to pray for them that per-*

(*g*) In toto Novo Testamento, non sunt præcepta urgentia, sed tantum exhortationes & obsecrationes. Nec Christus nec apostoli quenquam unquam coegerunt: & Spiritus sanctus vocatur in hoc Spiritus paracletus, ut exhortetur. *Luth.* 3. Responso ad libr. Ambr. Cathar.

secute us, and despitefully use us: He will not have us to be enemies to any, or to do evil to any, or to persecute and use despite to any; he will have us to beware of false prophets, but not to destroy them; and to avoid heretics, but not to kill them; and will have neither of them burnt with any fire, but the fire of love (*h*).

5. In that he will have all things in his kingdom, ordered and done only by the law of love, and nothing by any law of violence or compulsion.

Now this kind of government of the true church, doth grievously offend the world and worldly church, and the governors of both; because they know no government of the church at all, but that of the ecclesiastical and civil power intermingled; and if this be made void, they can do nothing at all in the government of the church; but think, according to their unbelief, all things presently will come to confusion; for they want faith to commit the government of Christ's own church to his own care, by his Word and Spirit. And thus they are offended at this true government also.

6. And lastly, (for I will name no more particulars at this time) They are offended at Christ's true ministry.

Because Christ, under the New Testament, hath erected and constituted a new ministry; not through any ecclesiastical ordination, but merely through the unction of his Spirit, without any regard at all to a man's outward calling or condition in the world, but whether (as I said before) a man may be a scholar, or clergyman, or gentleman, or tradesman, if Christ call him, and pour forth his Spirit on him; that, and that only makes him a true minister of the New Testament (*i*).

(*h*) Igne charitatis comburendi sunt hæretici, & quicunque impie sapiunt & docent. *Luth. tom.* 2.

(*i*) In Novo Testamento ostenduntur omnia, quæ facienda omittendaque sunt, sed memo cogitur; omnibus permittitur ut vel pereant, vel. salvi fiant. *Luth. Respon. ad Ambros. Cathar.*

And of this new and offensive ministry to the world and worldly church, Christ himself was the first. For he was not of the tribe of *Levi*, as the apostle saith, *Heb.* vii. "but of the tribe of *Judah*, of which *Moses* speaks nothing touching priesthood;" how then did Christ become the first and chief minister of the New Testament? The Spirit of Christ tells us by *Isaiah* lxi. and Christ himself tells us, *Luke* iv. saying, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted*, &c. So that our Lord Jesus Christ, being (according to the dialect of antichrist) a lay-man, and having never learned letters, nor been brought up a scholar, but being brought up with *Joseph* in the trade of a carpenter, and not ordained, neither by the church of the Jews, nor allowed by them, was yet the first and chief minister of the New Testament, through the unction of the Spirit only.

Now the worldly church were extremely offended at this very thing, as you may see in the gospel, *Matt.* xiii. 54, 55. *Jesus came into his own country, and taught them in the Synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished:* (for no man spake like him, for he taught with authority, and not as the Scribes) *but they said, Whence hath this man* (this mechanic man) *this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brethren and sisters all with us? and they were offended in him;* that such a man that had no degrees nor ordination, should yet be a minister.

And as Christ himself was the first minister of this sort, so he chose others in the same manner: He chose fishermen, and tent-makers, and publicans, plain men, and of ordinary employment in the world, and only put his Spirit on them, and this was their sufficient unction to

the ministry. And thus it was foretold by *Joel*, chap. ii. 28. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy.* There needs nothing to the ministry of the New Testament but only God's pouring out his Spirit: Wherefore Christ bids his disciples stay at Jerusalem till they should receive the promise of the Spirit, and then they should go forth and teach.

And so after, as believers received the Spirit, so they became ministers of the New Testament, as we see in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, and in the first three hundred years after Christ. For there is but one only ministry of the New Testament, which is common to all men alike, who have received the Spirit of God, and to none else, though never so excellently qualified with natural abilities, and human learning.

For the things of the gospel are altogether invisible things, and cannot be known but by the teaching of the Spirit, though a man have all the wisdom and knowledge in the world; as *Paul* declares, 1 *Cor.* ii. 8—10. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man understood the things that God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us* (believers) *by the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the Spirit of a man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world* (which, for its highest perfection, hath only human wisdom and knowledge) *but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

Where we learn, that the things of the gospel, and of the kingdom of God, are not known at all, nor discerned in the least measure, but by God's Spirit; which Spirit is given to all that believe: and this Spirit alone is sufficient,

both to enable us to know clearly and certainly the things of God, and also to publish them unto others, and nothing of man, or the creature, can add to it.

Wherefore, when Christ chose his ministers, according to his Father's counsel, he chose not the wise and learned, but plain, simple men; that it might appear to all the world, throughout all ages, how infinitely able the unction of his Spirit alone is, without any addition of any thing else, for the ministry of the New Testament: And Christ, upon the serious consideration of this strange choice of God by him, breaks forth into this thanksgiving, *Matt.* xi. 25. *I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things* (that is, the word of faith, and mystery of Christ, and his kingdom *from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, because it pleased thee.* And *David*, admiring this wonderful dispensation, speaks thus in the joy of his heart, *Psal.* viii. 1, 2. *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the world, who hast set thy glory above the Heavens!* and then shewing wherein this high glory of God appears, saith, *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.* God useth no other instrument to overcome the greatest enemies and avengers, that arise in the world and worldly church, than the strength he ordains out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, that is, true believers, who live only on the sincere milk of the word.

The Lord had all the world before him, to have chosen out of it whom he pleased, to be the instruments by whom he would hold forth his word and gospel to all nations: Yet in his infinite wisdom, and gracious counsel, and good pleasure, he would pass by the wise and learned men, and great philosophers, and subtle disputants, as *Paul* affirms, 1 *Cor.* i. 19. that God hath said, *I will destroy the wisdom*

of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. God is so far from making use of human wisdom and prudence in the gospel of his Son, that he quite destroys it, and brings it to nothing: Wherefore *Paul* adds, ver. 20. *Where is the wise? where is the learned or lettered man? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? for after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* By the foolishness of preaching, that is, by the word of faith, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, which the world reckons foolishness: by this alone, doth God bring about the salvation of the elect.

Now at these things how grievously are the worldly-wise, and deep learned ones (as they esteem themselves) offended; that God's Spirit alone should be a sufficient unction for the ministry of the New Testament, and that God should, on set purpose, lay aside the wise and prudent men, and choose babes, and out of their mouths ordain his great strength, to set up Christ's kingdom in the world, and to destroy Antichrist's? Yea, this doctrine will chiefly offend the university.

Objection. For you will say, if this be so, what need is there then of our philosophy, and of our arts and sciences, to the ministry of the New Testament? And what need is there of our acts and clerums? And what need is there of our scarlet and tippets? And what need is there of our hoods and caps, &c. If the unction of the Spirit alone be sufficient for the right ministry, and Christ do perfect his praise by the mouths of babes and sucklings, then what need is there of all these things?

I *answer.* No need at all, as to Christ's kingdom, and the ministry of that: For it is one of the grossest errors that ever reigned under Antichrist's kingdom, to affirm

that universities are the fountains of the ministers of the Gospel, which do only proceed out of Christ's flock.

And because you will be greatly offended at me for speaking thus, you shall hear what *Luther* saith to this matter, on 2 *Pet.* ii. 1. upon these words, *but there were false prophets among the people, as there shall be false teachers among you;* the word *Peter* uses here is ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, false doctors, or false masters; and *Luther* saith it came to pass by the singular counsel of God, that our teachers should be called doctors and masters, that it may appear to all whom *Peter* here means: And he farther saith, that *Peter* hereby doth undoubtedly tax the universities, in which such men are created, and out of which have proceeded all the preachers in the world: so that there is no town or city under the whole kingdom of Antichrist, which hath not such doctors and masters as are created in the universities. For the whole world (saith he) is of this opinion, that the universities are the fountains whence they should flow, who ought to teach the people. Now this (saith he) is a most horrible and abominable error, so that nothing has proceeded, in all the world, out of any thing, so much to be opposed, as out of the universities: Wherefore (saith he) *Peter* saith that all these are false masters and false doctors. Thus *Luther.**

Objection. Now if any say, This doctrine being commonly taught and received, will throw down the universities:

I *answer.* If the universities will stand upon an human and civil account, as schools of good learning for the instruct-

* Quo indubie taxat academias in quibus tales homines creantur, e quibus prodierunt omnes in orbem prædicatores, &c. Totus enim orbis in hac sententia est, hos fontes esse, e quibus scaturiant qui docere populum debeant. Hic est error horrendus & abominandus, ut nihil æque aversandum ulla ex re, quam ex academiis prodierit, &c. *Luth. in we.*

ing and educating youth in the knowledge of the tongues and of the liberal arts and sciences, thereby to make them useful and serviceable to the commonwealth, if they will stand upon this account, which is the surest and safest account they can stand on; and will be content to shake hands with their ecclesiastical and antichristian interest, then let them stand, during the good pleasure of God; but if they will still exalt themselves, above themselves, and place themselves on Christ's very throne, as *if they had ascended up on high to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts to men for the work of the ministry;* and so will presume to darken the glory of Jesus Christ, and his true ministry, which He sends forth, as his Father sent Him; then let them, in the name of Christ, descend into that darkness, out of which they first sprang, that the glory of Christ may fill the world.

And thus have I declared how the world and worldly church are offended at Christ, and his word, and worship, and church, and government, and ministry; and so consequently at all his things.

And now I proceed to the third general I propounded; to wit, to shew,

Third point.

How great an evil it is to be thus offended at Christ and his things.

And this appears in many particulars.

1. One evil is, that to be offended at Christ and his things, is a certain evidence that men are wholly ignorant of Christ and of God, though they be called christians, and have the name of God always in their mouths: For if men knew Christ aright, and God in Christ, it were impossible they should be offended at Him; and inasmuch as they are offended, it is certain they do not know Him by any revelation from the Father. Wherefore Christ

tells his disciples, *John* xvi. 3. that the chief ground of that offence which the world and worldly church should take against them who are his true members, and have received the same word and Spirit with him, through true faith, is, *because they have not known the Father nor him.* For he that knows Christ in christians, is not offended at them; and he that knows God in Christ, is not offended at Him: But they that are offended at Christians, know not Christ; and they that are offended at Christ, know not God.

2. When men are offended at Christ and his things, it is a sign they are real unbelievers, whatever forms of godliness they may live under; and though it may be they have been old professors; for *Peter* saith, *Christ is precious to them that believe;* wherefore, they that are offended, are destitute of faith.

3. They that are offended at Christ, lose all that spiritual and eternal advantage that comes by Christ to true believers; and so fall short of the love of God in Christ, of reconciliation with God in Christ, of the righteousness, wisdom and power, and of all the fulness of God in Christ; of eternal redemption from the law, sin, death, and hell by Christ; and of all that great salvation that is in and by him; and Jesus Christ is wholly in vain to them.

When men are fully and irreconcileably offended at Christ and his things, it is a sign they are of the wicked one, of the seed of the serpent; as Christ told such offended Jews, *Ye are of your father, the devil; and my sheep hear my voice; but you hear it not,* (but are offended) *and therefore you are none of my sheep.*

5. They that are offended at Christ, are utterly ruined through such offence: Wherefore Christ is called *a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence to them that are disobedient, and stumble at the word:* And he is said *to be set for the fall*

and ruin of many in Israel; and *Matt.* xxi. 44. Christ saith, *Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whosoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.*

For whoever stumbles, or dashes against this stone, dashes against God himself in the nature of man: He dashes against the counsel and decree of God; against the wisdom and understanding of God; against the love, mercy, righteousness, truth, and power of God; against the eternal Word and Spirit of God; and no man perishes like that man: For he incurs all that wrath, vengeance, destruction, and damnation, which the Lord God himself, in all his infinite wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, justice, and power, can inflict on him to all eternity; and so he is indeed ground to powder.

Yea further, that man that stumbles against Christ, is not only ruined by such offence, but ruined without all means or hope of recovery: They that are broken against him, and by him, are broken in pieces like a potter's vessel, which can never be made up again: They that fall against him, never rise again; they that are ruined by him, are never repaired again. If a man were dashed in pieces by *Moses*, he might be repaired again by Christ; but he that is destroyed by the Saviour, by whom shall he be saved? He that was condemned by the justice of God for sin, might recover again by the love and mercy of God in Christ; but he that is destroyed by the love and mercy of God, is past all hope and remedy.

Wherefore I entreat you to consider this thing with all your hearts: For nothing makes such ruins in the world, as the sin of being offended against Christ and his gospel. This is the sin that ruined *Jerusalem* of old, and *Germany* of late; and if any thing undo this commonwealth, this will undo it; the offence that is taken by mean men, and by men in place and authority, against Christ and his gospel.

And this is the sin also that is like to undo and ruin the university, and to raze it down to the very ground, even your horrible envy, enmity, and opposition to the truth of the gospel: When Christ's word, or the truth as it is in Jesus, is hated, opposed, derided and scoffed at in your colleges, in your schools, in your meetings; yea sometimes in your pulpits; this sin will dash you in pieces, that you shall find none to recover you. This sin will engage against you the Son of the living God; and when his wrath is kindled against you not a little, but to the very utmost, for so great wickedness, shall then your* masters, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Pithagoras*, &c. be able to deliver you? Or shall *Thomas* and *Scotus*, and other schoolmen, with their cold, vain, and antichristian divinity, help you? Or shall the secular arm, and worldly power (whom you have seduced for many ages) be able to shelter you in such an hour? No certainly; but if you continue in your bitter enmity against the true and spiritual word and gospel of Christ, Christ lives and reigns to bring you down wonderfully, and to make your name a shame and a curse to the whole true church of God.

And this poor contemptible doctrine of the gospel, which you hear to-day, and (it may be) most of you despise, and esteem no more than a straw for strength; this very word shall prevail against you, and triumph over you: And the poor people of God, that small handful of believers that are amongst you, whom you despise in your hearts, and reckon but as the filth and off-scouring of the place, even they shall see your downfall, and shall say, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, who hast judged thus;* and shall say again, *Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

* Certum est, Aristotelem mortuum & damnatum, esse doctorem hodie omnium universitatum magis quam Christum. *Ruth. Respons. ad Libr. Ambros. Cathar.*

And this now have I spoken in faithfulness to Jesus Christ, and in faithfulness to his true church, and in faithfulness also to the university, that they might hear, and avoid that ruin, which will otherwise inevitably befal them for their offence at Christ and his gospel. And now let them that can receive it, receive it, and let them that cannot, deride and reject it; but whether you receive it, or whether you reject it, sure I am, I have spoken the truth, which God himself, in his due time, will witness to: And so much also for this point.

The fourth point is,

The blessedness of them that are not offended at Christ, according to Christ's word here,

Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Now those very few who are not offended at Christ and his things, when the whole world and worldly church are offended, their blessedness appears in many particulars.

1. As first, in that it is evident that they all are taught of God, and have heard and learned from the Father himself, touching the Son: And they that see Christ by the revelation of the Father, are not at all offended at him, when all other men are. For such do clearly see Christ's power in his weakness; his glory in his reproach; his exaltation in his abasement; his divine nature in his human: they see his sufferings were for our sins, his stripes to heal us, his death to deliver us from death; and all this they know, not only by the letter of the word, but also by the revelation of the Father in their hearts, and so they cannot be offended at Christ, who see him thus. Wherefore when the world and worldly church had many different opinions of Christ, and *Peter*, notwithstanding, acknowledged him to be *the Son of the living God*, Christ replied, *Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is in heaven*; And this is thy blessedness, that thou knowest me by the

revelation of the Father, and so knowest me aright, and art not offended.

He then that is not offended at Christ, when all other men are, hath for certain the Father's teaching, and sees Christ far otherwise than the world and worldly church do; he sees Christ in all his mystery, and in all his glory; and when we see him thus, we value him never the worse for the form of a servant, nor for all his reproaches and sufferings from the world, but we rather behold these things with the greater wonder and comfort; seeing, for our sakes, he humbled himself from the form of God, to the form of a servant, and in that form to the death of the cross.

2. They are blessed, because, through this revelation of the Father, they have true faith in Christ wrought in them. For true faith in Christ doth necessarily follow the Father's revelation; and when God teaches us Christ, we must needs believe in him; and through this faith we know him by experience: And he that knows Christ through the experience of faith, finds and feels Christ to be all that to him, which the scripture speaks of him: He, through this faith, feels "Christ to be made unto him of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," and all things; and Christ, being through faith, made all that to him, which he is in himself, it is not possible he should be offended at him.

Farther, through this experience of faith, Christ becomes precious to him; as *Peter* saith, 1 *Pet.* ii. 7. *To you who believe, he is precious:* That very Christ, which to others is a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, is precious to them who have faith, and know him by experience; so precious, that they esteem all the greatest and most excellent things in the world but dross and dung in comparison of him; and such believers have chosen to part with their liberty, their estates, their relations, and their own lives, all which are precious things in themselves,

rather than they would part with this infinitely more precious Christ.

3. They are blessed, in that, through this faith they have establishment, as Christ saith, *on this rock I will build my church:* And he that hath Christ for his only foundation, is never offended at him, whatever scandals the world and the devil raise up against him; But he that hath another foundation than Christ, to wit, either his own works and righteousness, or the world, and the things of the world, when scandals come, they are presently offended, and their offence against Christ declares they are not built on him. But they whom nothing can offend, are surely built and established on Christ, and in this they are blessed.

4. They who have received the revelation of the Father, and through this revelation, true faith, and through this true faith, firm establishment, are farther blessed, in that all such are past perishing; for he that cleaves so inseparably to Christ, that nothing can offend him, and is so firmly built on Christ, that nothing can remove him, it is impossible for him to perish by any thing: Wherefore it is said, *Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect and precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded:* And *Matt.* xvi. saith Christ, *On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail.*

5. And last of all, they that have escaped the offence of Christ, are sure of salvation: For such do truly partake of all that infinite and everlasting advantage that is by Christ; they partake of his own righteousness, and wisdom, and truth, and power, and nature, and life, and word, and Spirit, and of all his fulness; and thus they have true possession of the beginnings of eternal life, as *John* saith, *These things have I written to you that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life abiding in you,* 1 John v. 13. and Christ saith, *I give unto my sheep eter-*

nal life; that very life which was in the Father, and was communicated to Christ, and manifested in his human nature.

And in all these respects are they blessed that are not offended at Christ, as Christ affirms, *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

And so now I proceed to some uses.

5. The uses.

1. To warn all sorts of men, that they take special care that they be not offended at Christ, and the things of Christ: You have heard that the world, and the wisest, and greatest of the world, and that the worldly church, and the most holy and religious in that, are offended at Christ: And you have heard also how great an evil it is to be offended, and how great a blessedness it is not to be offended; wherefore I do advise you from the word, to take care that you be not found amongst them who are offended at Christ.

Objection. But you will be ready to say, We hope we are not offended at Christ, but we do love, honour, and embrace both Christ, and the things of Christ.

To this I answer, That many do usually say they are not offended at Christ, and it may be, some may think so too, who yet indeed, and before the Lord, are grievously offended at him; as may thus appear. For,

1. First, He that is offended at the true word of Christ, is offended at Christ himself; For Christ is the word, the gospel word, the word that was with God, and was God, and came into the flesh; and that spake, and suffered, and died, and overcame all in that flesh; and Christ said it was expedient for the church, that he should withdraw his flesh, or bodily presence, and only continue that presence of his with them, which is by the living word of God, through the gospel; and this is that Jesus Christ who is present with believers to the end of the world.

And so he that is offended at the true spiritual word, held forth by the confession of faith, is offended at Christ himself, who is present in that word; wherefore saith *Peter*, 1 Pet. ii. 8. *He is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them that stumble at the word.* The most people adore the outward name of Christ, but yet cannot endure the true word of Christ. Now all that are offended at the true spiritual word of Christ, and right doctrine of the gospel, are offended at Christ himself, and stumble at that stumbling-stone. And thus multitudes are offended at Christ, who think themselves very free from this sin.

2. They that are offended at true believers, are offended at Christ himself. For they are in the world as he was, and walk as he did walk; and they are one flesh and spirit with him; they are his members, they are Himself; and whosoever is offended at them, is offended at Him. For Christ is the self-same, both in himself the head, and in believers his members. And these are the children of God, together with Him the first-born, and these are comprehended in the same love, chosen with the same choice, called with the same calling, sanctified with the same holiness, kept by the same power, and glorified with the same glory: These partake of the same divine nature, and have the same word and spirit dwelling in them, in the same righteousness, wisdom, grace and truth; and there is no difference between Christ and them, but what is between the head and the members, the first-born and his brethren. And so, they that are offended at these, would as certainly and necessarily be offended at Christ himself, if he had lived in their time, or if they had lived in his time.

It is manifest then, that they who are offended at the word of Christ, and at the works of Christ, at the nature and life of Christ in believers, would have been offended at them in Christ himself. Yea, they who are offended at

Christ in believers, would much more have been offended at Christ in himself; because what is in a christian but in part, was fully in Christ; and what is in a christian in a small measure, was in Christ without measure; and there was in Christ a far more glorious presence and manifestation of God, than in any christian; and proportionably would they have been offended at Him in himself, who are truly offended at him in his members.

3. They who are offended at the sufferings which come on christians for Christ's sake, are offended at Christ himself, because they suffer not on their own account, but on Christ's, and the cross they take up and bear, is His, and not their own. If they would live as other men, in the common religion of the nation, and make use of the form of godliness without the power; and comply with that doctrine and discipline which the clergy shall allow for orthodox, and the magistrate accordingly approve and confirm: Then might they live as quietly and prosperously as other men; but because they cleave only to Christ, and take him for their only master in the things of God, and receive his word in faith, and then hold it forth to others, therefore the world hates them; as Christ said, *I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world.*

Wherefore every true christian, who speaks and professes the word of faith, the word which exalts Christ alone and his things, and throws down all other things of the world, though in the highest esteem with men, must needs meet with his enemies and avengers, his *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, his *Herods* and *Pilates:* And now, when the carnal church, which hath the favour and countenance of the state, sees poor christians, for the word's sake, suffering all the hatred, malice and rage of the world, and worldly church, they are greatly offended at them;

and in being offended at them, they are offended at Christ himself; for it is his cause in which they suffer, and not their own; and it is he who suffers in his cause, more than they, as is evident by that complaint of his, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* I say, as it is Christ that is, and doth all in his true saints, so also it is he that suffers all in them; and they who are offended at these sufferings of believers, which they suffer in and for Christ are offended at Christ himself.

And in these three respects it doth plainly appear, that many who pretend to honour the outward name of Christ, are yet indeed grievously offended at him.

2. The second use is another caution, to warn all men to take heed, that they be not offended themselves at Christ, neither be troubled nor offended with the offences of others: but when we see the whole world and worldly church offended at Christ and his things, let us take care that we be not offended also; but let us consider,

1. That it is no new thing that Christ and his gospel should be stumbled at, and contradicted by the world and worldly church: For thus it was foretold by the prophets, and thus it hath been done ever since Christ was manifested in the flesh. In the days of his ministry, his doctrine was so contrary to carnal reason, and the human apprehensions of men, in matters of religion, that many of his disciples said, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* John vi. Yea, *many of his disciples murmured at his doctrine, and went back, and walked no more with him:* And all along, during Christ's ministry, many were snared, and stumbled, and fell, and were broken thereby; and he that is troubled and offended at this, must get him another Christ, and another gospel; for the true Christ is set for a sign to be spoken against; and the true gospel is set for a word of contention and contradiction to the carnal christians, and to the whole world.

Wherefore, when we see, in our time, the world and worldly church offended at Christ and his gospel, let us know that thus it hath been from the beginning; and let us know that as Christ and his gospel, are the same now as they were then, so the world and antichrist, and the devil, the head of both, are the same also; and therefore it cannot be, but Christ and his gospel must suffer the same contradiction in our time, as they have done in all former times.

2. That we may not be offended with the common and general offence of others, let us consider that Christ and his gospel are never the worse for the offence which the world takes at them; but Christ is still the Son of the living God, and the gospel is still the power of God to salvation, to every one that believes; and Christ and his word do still remain a sure foundation for the true church of God: That *Christ crucified*, which *is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness*, is, notwithstanding, *to them who believe, Christ the power of God and Christ the wisdom of God:* 1 Cor. i. So that Christ is not the worse for the world's being offended at him, neither do the faithful think him the worse: Nay, the more vile he is to others, he is still the more precious to them.

3. Let us consider, that notwithstanding all the offence of men, Christ and his gospel still remain and continue what they are, and cannot be prevailed against. Men may be offended at Christ and his word, but they cannot destroy and extinguish them; but they still remain, and do always prevail against all things that oppose them.

Wherefore, to deliver us from the scandal of all men's being offended against Christ, we are to consider, that as all the world have been, are, and will be against Christ, so Christ and his kingdom shall rise up and increase against all the world, and against all their thoughts and endeavours; and all their councils, contrivances, and

industrious actings, shall not be able to hinder the kingdom of Christ from prospering, and growing great; but it shall arise, and stand up in all its glory, out of the midst of all the offences and contradictions in the world. Wherefore, Christ and his kingdom are called a tried stone; for he hath long ago endured whatever the world and worldly church could do against Him, and whatever the might and malice of men and devils could do against Him, and yet hath overcome all: All that have opposed Him have been dashed in pieces by Him, in the several ages of the world; and he and his kingdom still remain, and shall remain for ever; for he is a sure tried stone. And they, in this town and university, who are the most grievously offended at the word, shall not, by all their subtilty, malice, slanders, evil-speaking, nor by any thing they can say or do, design or undertake, be able to prevail against it; but they must shortly die, and depart out of the world, and in despite of them, leave this word of God behind them, to live and flourish, and overspread the world. And these considerations, if entertained by faith, may keep us from being offended at the offence of the whole world: And this for the second use.

3. In the third place, I shall shew you how believers ought to carry themselves in the midst of those offences that are taken against Christ, and against themselves for Christ's sake, that is, his life and doctrine's sake.

1. First then, We ought to be careful to abide in Christ, and to walk in Christ; to speak all our words, and to do all our works, and to live our whole life in Christ, and in his Spirit; that so the world may not be offended at us who are nothing, and do nothing in ourselves, but at Christ in us, who is and doth all in us: And then, as we shall certainly be established and preserved in Christ, through our abiding in Him; so they shall as certainly

perish, and be ruined through His abiding in us, and their dashing against Him in us.

2. To carry ourselves aright in the midst of offences, let us be sure that the word we believe and hold forth is Christ's word, and then we may be very confident that this truth and cause shall and must remain, how many adversaries soever it may have: and though the world and devil may rage against it, yet (as hath been said) they shall never be able to overthrow it, much less to root it out.

A true christian must be able to say, I know the word which I believe and profess, is the only word of the Lord God, and his everlasting and unchangeable truth, and the last manifestation of his will by his own Son; and whatever word agreeth not herewith, is false, and of the devil, and antichrist; and therefore, by this word will I stay, though all the world be against me.

And when we are thus certain of the word of God, through faith and the Spirit, it comforts the heart, and makes it glad, and settles it in inward peace and rest, in the midst of all outward oppositions and troubles, as through God's goodness we have found by experience. For when we know that the word which we have received and profess, is the very doctrine of the Son of God, then also we know that it shall prevail against all kingdoms, commonwealths, states, governments, societies, universities; against all laws, orders, decrees, acts, and against all sorts and degrees of worldly and ecclesiastical powers, which are contrary thereunto; and shall, in the time appointed by God, utterly consume them, and bring them to nothing.

And by these means, to wit, by abiding in Christ, and being all in Him; and by being sure that the word we believe and profess, is His word, we may live safely in the midst of all offences, without the least prejudice.

4. Lastly, I shall speak a few words to those in this university and town, who are offended at Christ and his gospel; and also a few words to those, who (through the grace of God) have escaped this offence, and so shall conclude this matter.

And first for you who are offended at Christ and his word, (which we must needs say is come amongst you in truth, and in plainness,) and are angry at it, and storm at it, and reproach it, and think and contrive how to resist it, and to hinder the free course and passage of it in this place; because it is not only contrary to the philosophical divinity of the schools and university, and the common carnal religion of the nation, but doth also reprove and condemn them, and will have *the haughtiness of men bowed down*, and *the pride of men laid low*, and *the Lord Jesus Christ and his things only exalted:* and that here, where the wit, and wisdom, and parts, and learning, and accomplishments of men, have ruffled it, and reigned hitherto; I say, you that are thus offended for this cause, are offended at Christ himself, and at God in Christ, and you do stumble at the stumbling-stone, and shall so fall thereby, as to be broken in pieces: Yea, this stone itself shall fall upon you, and shall grind you to powder, and you shall "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" and this destruction shall be poured on you with the greatest severity and wrath, that God himself can inflict in all his infiniteness and eternity; for *if* (as the penman of the epistle to the *Hebrews* saith) *the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, what escaping can there be for them who neglect that great salvation, which was published at first by the Lord Christ, and afterwards confirmed by the first believers, and witnessed to by signs and miracles, and gifts of the Spirit, by God himself:* Heb.

ii. 2, 3. and if (as the same believer saith, *he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be guilty, who treads under foot the Son of God?* &c. And assuredly it had been much better for you, if you had lived among the *Heathen* and *Pagans*, where the gospel of God our Saviour had never been heard, than to hear this joyful sound, which manifests the love of God, and brings along with it remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit, through faith in Christ, and to be offended at it, and so to be destroyed by the word of salvation, and to be immediately punished with eternal death, by Him who is the true God and eternal life. And this is the heavy burden which the word of the Lord hath laid on your shoulders, and you cannot remove it.

2. And then for you true believers, you little flock, you few chosen out of the many called, who hear the word of Christ, and are not offended at it; though you hear it every where, and that with both ears, in this university and town, contradicted, misreported, reproached, scandalized, and called error, heresy, new light, faction, schism, sedition; and hear all manner of evil spoken against it falsely, not only by the rude and ignorant people, but also by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* and *hypocrites* of this place; and yet for all these offences, you are not offended at it, but own it, and love it, and embrace it, notwithstanding all the extreme disadvantages it hath from this place, which is counted by carnal people the very fountain of religion and the ministry; knowing by God's own teaching, that it is the word of righteousness and life, and the truth as it is in Jesus, though contrary to the sense of the university and schools, who have generally their teaching from man: To all such, I say by the word of the Lord, Blessed are ye, of the blessed of the Lord, for you are all taught of God touching Christ, and have heard and learned the Son from the Father, and through

this teaching you have true faith in Christ, and so know Him by experience; whereupon Christ is most precious to you; and through this faith you are established on Christ, so that nothing from earth or hell can remove you.

This is your blessedness from the Lord; and the world nd the devil shall never be able to make it void; and erefore, go and eat your bread with cheerfulness, and e down, and rise, and live in safety, under the shadow the Almighty, though in this world, and in this place, dwell among bears and lions, and have your conversation in the midst of scorpions; for Christ himself hath lessed you in himself, and you shall be blessed for ever; *lessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

BAPTISMS,

REDUCED FROM ITS ANCIENT AND MODERN CORRUPTIONS;

AND

RESTORED TO ITS PRIMITIVE

SOUNDNESS AND INTEGRITY.

ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE SUBTSANCE OF FAITH, AND THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

ISAIAH LII. 15.

That which hath not been told them, they shall see; and that which they have not heard, they shall consider.

TO THE READER.

THE doctrine of Baptisms hath been dark and obscure in the church, from the very primitive times; and hath had more of human notion, than of divine truth in it; and therefore *Zuinglius*, writing, touching this point, speaks thus in the beginning of his book; *Illud mihi ingenue circa libri initium dicendum est, fere omnes eos, quotquot ab ipsis apostolorum temporibus, de baptismo scribere instituerunt, non in paucis* (*quod pace omnium hominum, dictum esse velim*) *a scopo aberravisse* (*a*): that is, "In the "beginning of my book, saith he, I must ingenuously "profess, that almost all those that have undertaken to "write of baptism, even from the very times of the "apostles, have (which I desire may be spoken with the "favour of all) not in a few things erred from the scope." And as he affirms, that almost all before him had erred in many things, touching baptism, so did he himself also err as well as they, not in a few: And it is as free for me, or any body else, to differ from him, and other late writers, as for them to differ from former writers; especially if that be true, which godly and learned *Chemnitius* affirms out of *Augustine*, that these things are not *tanquam articuli fidei, a quibus diversum sentire piaculum sit anathemate dignum* (*b*).

And therefore, reader, I acquaint thee beforehand, that in this point I shall speak much otherwise, than all former or later writers whatever, that I have met with: And though I do not, without some fear and trembling,

(*a*) *Zuingl.* libel. de Baptis. tom. 2. f. 57.

(*b*) *Chemnit.* Examen Concil. Triden. l. de Bapt.

dissent from so many worthy and gracious men, that have been, and are, otherwise minded; yet it is the less grievous to me, because I differ from them, (I can say it in truth before the Lord) not out of any desire to be singular, or for any worldly or carnal end whatever, but only that I might cleave to the clear and evident word of God alone; even there, where I see the very faithful to leave it; seeing I am rather to join to the word, without men, than to men without the word; and where I find the most holy men in the world, and the word, parting, I am there to leave them, and to go along with the word.

And so, in all love and meekness, I tender this discourse to thee; desiring, that if thou canst not at present agree to what is therein contained, yet that thou wouldst not rashly judge and reproach it, seeing, through God's goodness, it may come to pass, that *what thou knowest not now, thou mayest know afterwards.*

But because I see this present generation so rooted and built up in the doctrines of men, I have the less hope that this truth will prevail with them; and therefore I appeal to the next generation; which will be farther removed from those evils, and will be brought nearer to the word; but especially to that people, whom God hath and shall form by his Spirit for himself; for these only will be able to make just and righteous judgment in this matter, seeing they have the Anointing to be their teacher, and the Lamb to be their light.

THE

DOCTRINE

OF

BAPTISMS.

THE Lord, foreseeing how great an evil it would be in the church, to leave men, either to their own or to other men's opinions and judgment in the things of God, did, in the very beginning of the Gospel, command and bind all the faithful to hear Christ alone, saying from heaven (that we might give absolute credit to his voice) *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him:* And the more the faithful have kept to the word of Christ, the more they have been free from error; and the more they have left this, and turned aside after the doctrines of men, (though men, in some measure faithful and holy) the more they have been perverted and seduced; insomuch that the true church of God, and the very faithful themselves, have received, held and maintained divers errors, and false doctrines, and opinions, even for many ages and generations; yea, and have not been altogether free from some, from the very apostles times; And because many or most godly men in former ages, held such and such opinions, therefore the following ages have taken them upon trust from them, and have entertained them as sure and certain, though not at all consulting, in those points, with the great doctor and apostle of the New Testament, Jesus Christ. And thus have the very elect themselves been drawn into much er-

ror, though they have still had Christ for their foundation, and were built on him so firmly by faith, that *the gates of hell could not prevail against them.*

Now to free the faithful from the former mistake, (and consequently from all error) there is no other way than this wholly to forsake the doctrines of men, and to lay by all those opinions that we have sucked in from our very cradles, and which are now become even a natural religion to us; I say, utterly to lay by, and wholly to forget all these things, and to come immediately to the pure and unerring word of God, and to the voice of Jesus Christ himself by his Spirit, wherein all things are true, sincere and perfect; and not to bring hearts to the word, that are prepossessed with doctrines and opinions learned of men; but to come thither with hearts and consciences free and unengaged, and in all meekness, uprightness, and simplicity of heart, to hear what Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, will say to his Spirit, which also is the Spirit of truth; and to receive and believe that alone, though never so differing from the opinions and doctrines of this present age, as well as of the former, though perhaps the whole nation would be offended with it.

And this is the course that I have observed, to come to some clear and certain knowledge in the doctrine of Baptisms: for having read much, and discoursed with many, touching this point, and having seriously considered what they say, as one that searched after the truth, for itself only, and for the satisfaction of my own soul; I do profess, I could scarcely find any thing spoken, for my spirit boldly and safely to lean on, perceiving most of what they said, to be but the apprehensions and thoughts of men; and that they spake very much by conjecture, and at uncertainty in this matter; and thereupon I resolved, wholly to withdraw from such discourse, and

to lay down whatever opinions I had before entertained touching this point, and to come to the plain and manifest scriptures, and from thence (after much seeking God) to learn whatever the Lord should please to teach me; choosing rather, to build on the clear word, though alone, than on any uncertain inferences, and blind conjectures of men, though embraced and magnified by all the world.

Now in this inquiry from the word, I met with that place in *Heb.* vi. 2. where the apostle, speaking of some of the first, and initial points of the Christian religion, names Βαπτισμῶν Διδαχη, the doctrine of Baptisms: whence I perceived, that in the primitive church, they had the doctrine of Baptisms in the plural number, and therefore did apply myself to search from the word, what these Baptisms might be; and so met with the baptist's own doctrine touching Baptisms, mentioned *Matt.* iii. *Mark* i. *Luke* iii. and *John* i. for all the evangelists make mention of this, it being a matter of so great concernment, and *Luke* makes mention of the ground of this doctrine of the baptist, chap. iii. 15. *As the people were in expectation*, (saith he) *and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not: John answered, saying*, &c. The people, it seems, had great and high thoughts of *John*, because he was the son of the high priest, conceived after an extraordinary manner, his parents being both well stricken in age, and past children by the course of nature: and then the manner of his life was strange, for he lived in the wilderness, out of the ordinary converse of the world; and his apparel and diet were unusual, being *raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat, locusts and wild honey;* but especially his ministry was mighty, being in the spirit and power of *Elias;* and his baptism, new and famous; so that all the people stood in great expectation of some

work or event from Him, that should manifest him to be the Christ. Wherefore *John*, to take them off from that gross and dangerous mistake, plainly told them all, and that openly, that *he was not the Christ*, but that there was a great deal of difference between himself and the Messias, and that both in regard of his person and office.

First for his office. For he begins to shew the difference from thence, because the newness of his baptism was the occasion of the peoples' conceiving that he was the Messias; whereupon he vilifies his own baptism in respect of Christ's; saying, *I indeed baptize you with water;* that is, my baptism is but water-baptism, that washes the body only with a corporeal element; but *one mightier than I, comes;* for I am but a creature, He the *power of God;* I but a servant, He the *Lord of all;* and one so infinitely excellent above all that I am, that the *latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose;* that is, I am unworthy to perform the meanest and lowest office for Him. And having thus first spoken meanly of his own baptism, and then magnified Christ's person above his own, now he proceeds also to magnify Christ's baptism above his own: *He* (saith he) *shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire;* that is, I that am a servant, do baptize with water; but he that is the Son, baptizes with the Spirit; my baptism washes but the body from the filth of the flesh, but his, the soul from the filth of sin; so that, by how much the spirit excels water, and God the creature, so much his baptism transcends mine.

Now, hence I gather clearly, even from the baptist's own mouth, that *John's* baptism and Christ's were distinct baptisms, the one water-baptism, the other fire-baptism: And though our late writers have, and do affirm, that *John's* baptism and Christ's make up but one entire baptism, yet the ancient christians generally apprehended them to be distinct; one whereof saith, *Illud mani-*

*festum est, alium fuisse Johannis Baptismum, alium Christi:** And I could produce many more testimonies besides, but it is not my meaning to entangle any body with the authorities of men; and therefore I shall make it plain by clear scriptures, and evidences from them, that *John's* baptism and Christ's are distinct.

1. *John's* baptism and Christ's are distinct in their appellations in scripture; for *John's* baptism was still so called, even when the Apostles used it; and it was not called by their names who administered it, but was still called *John's* baptism: Yea, after Christ's baptism came in, *John's* still retained its name, as being distinct from it; and therefore, *Acts* xviii. 24, 25, it is said, *Apollos taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.*

2. The scripture saith, that Christ's baptism was to follow *John's*, and did not accompany it at the same time: for in *Matt.* iii. *John* saith, *I do baptize you with water, but he that comes after me, i. e.* in order of time, *he shall baptize you:* And in *Luke* iii. *I have baptized you, but he shall baptize you;* which places plainly declare, that Christ's baptism did not go along with *John's*, but was to follow it; and that he was to baptize with the Spirit, after *John's* water-baptism had had its full course, to wit, when he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. And therefore Christ, after he was risen from the dead, and immediately before he was to ascend into heaven; though his disciples had used water-baptism, or *John's* baptism, for above three years; yet affirms that that which *John* had said of Him, touching his baptizing with the Spirit, was not yet fulfilled, but was shortly to be fulfilled, as appears, *Acts* i. 4, 5. *Christ, being assembled with the Apostles, commanded them that they should not depart from*

* *Aug.* contr. liter. Petil. 2. *c.* 37.

Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father; which, saith he, you have heard of me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Spirit, not many days hence; and this was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost; whence it is evident, that Christ's baptism did not go along with *John's*, and make that up one entire baptism with itself, seeing it followed, almost four years after; and therefore *John's* baptism and Christ's must needs be distinct.

3. It is evident, that Christ's baptism and *Johns'* were distinct, inasmuch as the baptism of Christ was necessary for those very persons, who had before been baptized with the baptism of *John;* whereas, if *John's* baptism had been one and the same with Christ's, that only had been sufficient; but now, those whom *John* had baptized with water, Christ was to baptize again with the Spirit, as in that place before mentioned; *I have baptized you with water, but one comes after me, who shall baptize you with the Spirit*, even you, whom I have before baptized with water: And this was not a second baptism, but the first baptism of the New-Testament, *John's* baptism being more legal than evangelical; and evangelical only in so much as it pointed out this baptism of Christ, at hand.

Again, the *Baptist* himself saith, *I have need to be baptized of thee;* so that the very author, or chief minister of water-baptism, stood in need of Spirit-baptism himself: *Paul* also, *Acts* xix. when he found certain disciples baptized only with the baptism of *John*, he baptized them again in the name of Christ, because they had not received the Spirit; and this baptism into the name of Christ, was not the repeating of any water, but merely the gift of the Spirit; for *Paul* preached to them largely the doctrine of faith in Christ, (for the text relates but the abstract of the thing) and laid his hands on them, and through his ministry the holy Spirit came upon them; and this was Christ's baptism indeed, and no renewing of

water at all, as the anabaptists would fain inforce from this place.

By these things it is evident that Christ's baptism and *John's* are distinct; and therefore, as what God hath joined, no man ought to put asunder; so what God hath put asunder, no man ought to join; as if the baptism of Christ were insufficient and incomplete, except we should add to it the baptism of *John;* which is exceedingly to eclipse the brightness of the Son of God, and to draw a veil over the greatest glory of the New Testament, which is the baptism of the Spirit.

Objection. If the ordinary objection shall be offered against this, to wit, that *John's* doctrine was the same with Christ's, and therefore his baptism was the same with his.

I *answer.* It is most true that *John* did preach Christ clearly, both in regard of his person and offices; but this was not his proper work as he was the baptist, but insomuch as he preached Christ in the Spirit, he belonged to the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual; as also *Abraham*, *Moses*, *David*, *Isaiah*, and all the prophets, did in the same sense: But so far forth as he preached the doctrine and administered the baptism, of repentance, and both these not really and spiritually, but only in the letter and sign, so far he belonged to the Old Testament rather than to the New; and here was *John* in his proper office. I say, so far as *John* preached Christ spiritually, he did not that as *John* the *Baptist*, but as *John* a believer: And so the same *John*, in regard of his baptist's office, belonged to the Old Testament; but according to the revelation which he had from the Father, touching Christ, and his faith in him, and confession of him, he belonged to the New. And except we learn thus to distinguish of *John's* doctrine, to wit, what he preached as baptist, and in his proper office, and what as a believer, who had the revelation of the Father, we shall never understand his baptism

aright: For *John's* baptism was the seal of his Old Testament doctrine, and not of his New; or of his own immediate ministry, and not of Christ's: at the highest, *John's* ministry and baptism pointed out Christ's, but neither of them were the same with Christ's.

And thus having cleared from the word, that *John's* baptism is distinct from Christ's, I shall proceed to speak of each of these baptisms apart by themselves, and to hold forth to others, what myself have learned, touching them, from the same word.

And first, I begin with *John's* baptism, as being the first in order of time.

Now the baptism of *John* was brought in besides the rite and manner of the law, and so was a sign of a great change to follow. The *Jews*, indeed, had their baptisms in the law; for they washed their members, garments, vessels, &c. and by this they were cleansed from legal pollutions, but not from any sin, or stain that did cleave to their conscience: But *John* was the author, or first minister of a new and unwonted baptism; calling all men to repentance for sin, and to flee from the wrath to come; and awakening them to confession of sin, and amendment of life; and also pointing out one to come, and now at hand; who should do all these things for them indeed, which neither he nor his baptism could do.

Now touching *John's* baptism, I shall shew,

First, the honourableness of it in itself.

And secondly, the weakness and imperfectness of it in reference of Christ.

And thirdly, the continuance and duration of it.

1. For the honourableness of it in itself, it appears in several passages.

1. That though the baptism of *John*, in itself, were more legal than evangelical, yet in this it did excel all the former legal baptisms, that it pointed out Christ's baptism near at hand; for as *John* himself was greater than

all the former prophets, because he pointed out with his finger, Christ, the true and great prophet of the church; so his baptism was more excellent than all the former baptisms, because it pointed out Christ's great and glorious baptism now at hand: as he saith, *I baptize with water, and he that comes after me shall baptize with the Spirit.*

2. *John's* baptism was from heaven, and not from men; it had its institution from God, and was not an ordinance he took up of his own head; *Luke* iii. 2. it is said, that at the beginning of *John's* setting forth to his baptism and ministry, *that the word of God came to him in the wilderness;* that is, he was inspired, instructed and taught by a word from God himself, touching his ministry, baptism, and the discovery of Christ he was to make; and John i. 6. *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;* and *ver.* 43 *He that sent me to baptize with water, said unto me.* He went not of his own accord, but God sent him to baptize; so that as God was the author of those inferior baptisms of *Moses*, so of this more high and excellent baptism of *John:* and hereupon the publicans, that received *John's* baptism, are said to justify God; and the Pharisees and lawyers that refused it, to reject against themselves, that is, to their own harm, the counsel of God, *Luke* vii. 29, 30.

3. Christ himself, who was born under the law, and subject to the law, submitted himself also to the baptism of *John*, as the last and liveliest ceremony: Matt. iii. 13. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, to be baptized of him;* and so Christ, who had submitted himself to the circumcision of *Moses*, submitted himself also to the baptism of *John:* and as he submitted himself to all the ceremonies of *Moses;* not for his own sake, but for ours; so also to the baptism of *John.* For, seeing Christ was free from sin, he stood in no need of repentance, and so not of that baptism, which was *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin;* but there the head, who was free

from sin, was baptized for the body, which was full of sin, that he might fulfil all righteousness, in his own person. And this was a great honour to the baptism of *John*, that Christ (though in reference to our flesh more than his own) submitted himself to it.

Thus it appears, that the baptism of *John* was very honourable, and of high account in its time; so that the very disciples of Christ took it up, and Christ himself suffered them, because *John's* baptism was the sign and forerunner of his, and because the time of his own baptism was not yet come; but Christ himself used it not, as *John* witnesses *chap.* iv. 2. saying, *Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples;* to wit, with *John's* baptism, which was water-baptism. For it became not the Son of God to baptize with a creature; nor the Lord of all to use the baptism of a servant.

And thus having shewed how honourable *John's* baptism was in itself (wherein I conceive I have not done him, though a servant, the least prejudice; but have fully attributed to his office, whatever the word, or he himself, a messenger of God, attributes to it) I shall now proceed to shew, that the baptism of *John*, how honourable and excellent soever, is yet far beneath and below Christ's; yea, and most weak and imperfect, in comparison of his.

For first, *John's* baptism was with a creature, with the element of water; for the creature could baptize but with the creature, that is, *John* with water; and so this was far beneath the baptism of Christ, which was the work of God by God, the work of the Father by the Son, and of the Son by the Spirit.

2. *John's* baptism was *tantum exterius lavacrum*, but outward, and reached the outward man only; the baptism of water reached but the body, and it could pierce no deeper; and after all the washing of the body with water, the soul still remained as full of filth, sin and cor-

ruption, as ever; and so it was far beneath Christ's, which reaches the soul: the baptism of *John* was the baptism of bodies, but the baptism of Christ, the baptism of souls; and only the baptism of the Spirit, reaches the Spirit, and attains to the soul, conscience, and inner-man, to purge and purify them.

3. The baptism of *John* was but a sign, and ceremony, though it had more life and light in it than any of the signs of the law, as being nearer to Christ, and more newly revived by God; and so, though useful in its season, yet the efficacy of it (after the manner of all signs) was but weak.

For first, it did not give the Spirit, not one drop of the Spirit; yea, some who were baptized with *John's* baptism did not know the way of the Lord perfectly; that is, had no certain knowledge of Christ, the only way to God, as *Apollos*, *Acts* xviii. yea, some of them did not so much as know *whether there were any Holy Ghost or not*, as those twelve disciples, *Acts* xix. much less had received the Spirit.

Secondly, Neither did it give repentance and remission of sin; (for what was the plunging of a man in cold water, towards repentance and remission of sin?) but these were the works of Christ's own baptism, which is the baptism of the Spirit: for no man can repent of sin, but by the presence of the righteousness of God in his heart, which is the work of that Spirit, which is given in Christ's baptism: neither can any remit sin, but God; our sins are never forgiven by God, till God dwells in us through Jesus Christ, by the work of the Spirit; so that repentance was given, and sin forgiven, but in hope only, in *John's* baptism; but really and truly in Christ's, which was the real baptism of repentance and remission of sins.

Thirdly, Neither did it give entrance into the kingdom of God; for the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, and no earthly or corporal thing can give entrance into

it: The baptism in the water of *Jordan* could deliver no man up into the kingdom of God, but the baptism in *that river that makes glad the city God*, Psal. xlvi. 4. in that *river clear as crystal, that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb*, which is the Spirit; which delivers up all that partake of it, first, into the kingdom of the Son, and after, through that, into the kingdom of the Father. The baptism of *John*, left men in that old world wherein it found them; but the baptism of Christ, delivers them up into the new world, or the kingdom of God.

Now, in all these respects it appears that *John's* baptism did not do the work of the baptism of the New-Testament; for then that only had been sufficient, and there had been no need of Christ's to come.

And thus you see that the baptism of *John*, as it is distinct from Christ's, so it is far inferior to his. And therefore, great hath been the mistake of many, for several ages, who have made *John's* baptism equal to Christ's; for what is this, but to make the servant equal to the Lord, and to set down the creature in the throne of the only begotten of the Father? Yea, and it is quite perverting of *John's* office; for *John* was to be *a burning and a shining light*, to usher in Christ the true light: He was to be as the morning-star, to usher in Christ the Sun of righteousness; and was not to be so much clouds and darkness to obscure him: He was but to point out Christ, and depart again, and not to sit in equal glory with him, on his throne in the New Testament. *John* said, he was not worthy to bear his shoes; and therefore they do not well, who have prepared an equal crown for him with Christ, who is *King of kings, and Lord of lords*.

Wherefore we must take great heed that we do not so magnify *John's* office, as to intrench on Christ's, and to make the Son, out of the bosom of the Father, to take up the baptism of *John*, a servant, but to administer one en-

tirely his own; surely this would not have been suitable to the glory of the only begotten Son of God.

The third thing I propound to speak to, touching *John's* baptism, is the time of its duration or continuance, and that was but very short; for *John's* baptism, as all the ceremonies of *Moses*, was but for a time; yea, this being nearer the truth and substance than they, was of less duration; as the morning star, though brighter than the rest of those heavenly lights, shines a shorter time than they, because the hasty appearance of the sun swallows it up. And so *John's* baptism was of great use, a little before Christ's manifestation to Israel, and continued till the time of his ascension; and then, when Christ's baptism began, the shadow was to give way to the substance, and the sign to the truth, and the letter to the Spirit, and the servant to the Son: So that Christ's baptism put an end to *John's* water-baptism, and Spirit-baptism to creature-baptism. For as all the prophets were until *John*, so *John* was until Christ; and *John* must no more exceed his bounds, than *Moses* and the prophets theirs; but as the prophets gave up to *John*, so *John* must give up to Christ. *John's* temporary ministry had a temporary baptism; but the everlasting gospel, (which is, that word in our flesh) hath an everlasting baptism, which is the pouring out of the Spirit. So then, *John* being a servant and forerunner of Christ, Christ was not to take up his baptism, but *John* was to resign up his baptism to Christ; yea, and as a servant, to deliver up all things into his hands, as heir and Lord: And so *John's* water-baptism was to last but till Christ's fire-baptism should come in, and then the fire should lick up the water; and as Spirit-baptism should increase, water-baptism should decrease. So that *John's* baptism, or water-baptism (which is all one) belongs not to Christ's kingdom, which is a kingdom not of the letter, but of the Spirit; not of signs and shadows, but of the truth: And therefore we leave it where we found it, even without

the bounds and reach of Christ's kingdom: for *John's* office and baptism reached unto Christ's kingdom, but hath no place in it; and to bring signs and ceremonies into the kingdom of truth, is (if rightly understood) to act against Christ glorified.

Objection. But some will say, This is strange indeed, that water-baptism should have no place in the kingdom of Christ; and therefore pray stay a little, for we have many things to object against it.

Objection. Why, this would rob us of our christianity.

I *answer.* No: For it is not water, but Spirit-baptism that makes us christians; and water-baptism hath been an unlawful blending or mixing of the church and world together; so that hitherto they could not be well distinguished from each other, to the great prejudice of the congregation of Christ.

Objection 2. But have so many ages erred, that have used water-baptism?

Answer. For the errors of former ages, and their great mistakes in many of the truths of God, I have nothing to say, but that of the Apostle, *How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

Objection 3. But you are the first man, for ought we know, that ever opposed it.

Answer. One single mean man with the word, may very justly and lawfully contradict the whole world without it; truth is not to be judged by multitudes, or an unity, but by the word.

Objection 4. But Christ himself was baptized with water, and surely that perpetuates it in the church.

Answer. Christ's being baptized with water under *John*, no more perpetuates water-baptism in the christian church than his being circumcised under *Moses*, perpetuates circumcision in the christian church, or his submitting to other *Mosaical* ceremonies perpetuates them; Christ brings

no temporal or carnal thing into his everlasting and spiritual kingdom, though himself submitted to them under their several dispensations, in the season of them.

Objection 5. But Christ justifies and commands water-baptism, in *John* iii. *Except a man be born of water, &c.* and *Matt.* xxviii. *Teach and baptize.*

Answer. I confess these are places that many have mistaken, to justify the practice of water baptism; but I shall shew you, that they do indeed misunderstand them. For that first place, *John* iii. 5. *Except a man be born* εκ υδατος και πνευματος, *of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:* I confess many of the ancients have, by water here mentioned, understood the material water; and have interpreted the text to imply external baptism, which was *John's* only; and hereupon divers of them have exceedingly magnified water, and ascribed it to the washing of souls, and the regeneration of christians in some measure: they not considering, in the mean time, what Christ saith in the very next verse, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit;* by which they might have learned, that outward and corporeal water can do nothing but outward and corporeal things; and can contribute nothing to the cleansing of souls and consciences from sin.

So that this place cannot be understood of corporeal water; and I could produce the testimonies of many godly men of good note to this purpose, but do forbear, because I would not have our faith built upon the authorities of men; but the thing is evident from the text itself; for it saith, *Except a man be born of water*, which shews the water he speaks of, must be such, as is able to give a new birth, and to make a man a new, that is, spiritual, holy, heavenly creature; and no water can do this, but the Spirit; and therefore Christ adds to water, the Spirit, by way of explication; as if he had said, "No man

can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be born again of water: but the water I speak of, is not material water, but the Spirit, which is able to produce in us a heavenly nature, through which only we can have entrance into a heavenly kingdom, seeing *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;*" so that the water Christ means in this place, is the Spirit; and many other places give witness to this, *John* iv. 10. *If thou didst know who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water:* And ver. 13, 14. *Jesus saith unto her, Whosoever drinks of this water* (meaning the water of the well, called *Jacob's* well) *shall thirst again; but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life:* And *John* vii. 37, 38. *Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

Now by water in all these places, is not meant material water, but the Spirit, as Christ himself explicates; and surely his testimony alone is sufficient.

But again, if in this place, *Except a man be born of water and the Spirit*, you will needs understand material water, why then, upon the same ground, you must needs understand that place in *Matthew*, of material fire, where it is said, *Matt.* iii. 11. *He shall baptize you with the holy Spirit, and with fire;* which is absurd, and contrary to reason: But water and fire, in each place, added to the Spirit, shew only the efficacy of the Spirit; and so you may as well bring in the use of material fire in baptism, from the text in *Matthew*, as of material water, from the text in *John*.

So that this place in *John* proves no authority of Christ,

for water baptism in his kingdom, which is the church of the New-Testament.

Now the other place, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;* is also of as little force as the former to prove water-baptism to be an institution of Christ. Indeed I find, that wherever men have met with the word baptism or baptize in the scripture, presently their thoughts have descended to material water; they not so well considering or understanding that water which is the Spirit, which is the only water that performs all the baptism in the kingdom of God.

Now for that place, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them;* they understand it thus, teach them, and baptize them with material water, using this form of words, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father*; &c. but herein they err from the mind of Christ: for by these words Christ leads his disciples from *John's* baptism to his own; as if he had said, "*John* indeed baptized with water, and ye have hitherto used his baptism; but I shall now shortly bapitze you with my own baptism of the Spirit; and from that time I would have you to teach all nations, and by the ministration of the Spirit, not baptize them, or dip them in cold water, (as *John* did in his own baptism, and you in his) but baptize them, or dip them into the name of God the Father, Son and Spirit; and note, that he saith not here, Βαπτιζοντες αυτους εντωι ονοματι, in the name, but εις το ονομα, into the name of the Father, &c. and by the name of God, is meant the power and virtue of God, or God himself: as *Mark* xvi. Christ saith, *In my name they shall cast out devils*, that is, in my power and virtue; so that the sense lies thus, *Teach the nations and baptize them into the name*, &c. that is, by your ministry, which shall be of the Spirit, and not of the letter, you shall baptize them, or dip them, or interest them into the name of God, who is the Father, Son, and

Spirit, as he hath discovered himself in his last and most glorious discovery of himself in the gospel; you shall, I say, dip them into his name, or sprinkle his name upon them, that they may be holy, just, true, merciful, righteous, good, &c. that is, your ministry, after you have received the Spirit, shall have such efficacy, that it shall cloath men with the name of God, and transform them into his very nature.

So that this place cannot be understood of water; but instead of baptizing in material water, as *John*, he tells them, they should baptize into the name of God, in such sort, that they that were before sinful, corrupt, and evil men, should now be taken up into the glory of the name of God. Neither can this place be understood of a form of words, which the apostles and their successors should use in baptizing, as most men have thought and taught: seeing no place of scripture can be named, wherein the apostles, in baptizing, used this form of words, saying, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit;* which they had undoubtedly done, if Christ had commanded it, as an absolute form. And because many will presently be ready to be enraged at this assertion, I will a little cool their heat with what *Zuinglius* saith of this place, who was one of the greatest enemies to the *Anabaptists*, that was in his time; *Christus Jesus*, saith he, *baptismi formulam qua uteremur, his verbis non instituit, quemadmodum theologi hactenus falso tradiderunt. Zuing.* lib. de Bapt. p. 66. tom. 2 *Oper.* that is, "Jesus Christ did not, in these words, institute a form of baptism, which we should use, as divines have hitherto falsely taught:" and he affirms it upon the same ground I have mentioned before.

Again, if in this place, *Go, teach and baptize,* be meant water-baptism, *Paul* did very ill observe the command of Christ, who baptized but two or three believing families at the most, with water-baptism, and yet preached the

word in a circuit from *Jerusalem* to *Illyricum*. Acts. xv. 19. through many kingdoms, countries, villages, people, but I say, *Paul*, though he used not water-baptism, yet did punctually fulfil the command of Christ, and *did teach and baptize them into the name of God.* So that no question, there were many churches planted in *Paul's* time, who beleived in Christ, and received the Spirit, and walked in fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another in the Father and the Son, who never were washed at all with water-baptism; for *Paul* knew well, that no outward thing is of any account in the kingdom of God; and that as circumcision and uncircumcision were nothing, so neither water-baptism nor the want of it were any thing, but a new creature is all; and if there be faith and the Spirit, they are sufficient to the kingdom of God, without any outward ceremonies whatsoever.

So that neither of these two places prove any institution of water-baptism of Christ, but that still remains *John's* baptism, and not Christ's.

Objection 6. The last, and that which seems the strongest objection, is, that the Apostles practised water-baptism, not only before Christ's baptism came in, but after; and this is most evident in very many places in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*.

I *answer*. True indeed, the Apostles did practise water-baptism, but not from Christ, but from *John*, whose baptism they took up; and an outward ceremony of honour and account is not easily and suddenly laid down; and hence some of the Apostles used circumcision, and that after the ascension of Christ; for circumcision was an honourable ceremony, used from *Abraham's* time; and so they could not (no not in the time of the New-Testament) suddenly and abruptly leave it off, but they did use it for a time, for their sakes who were weak; well knowing, that the circumcision without hands, would by degrees put an

end to the circumcision made with hands. For ceremonies are best laid down, and old customs best laid aside, by the efficacy of the Spirit, and the power of righteousness. And so in like manner the Apostles used the baptism of *John*, or water-baptism, it having been of high account in the dawning of the day of the gospel, and for the present, still continuing so; but they knew, that Spirit or fire-baptism, would by degrees consume water-baptism, and lick up all the drops of it; for so *John* himself intimates, saying, *He must increase, but I must decrease;* that is, the truth must eat out the ceremony, and the substance the sign, and the more his ministry and baptism comes in, mine shall go out; and the ministry of the Son, shall swallow up the ministry of the servant, as the sun-light doth the moon-light; and the baptism of fire shall devour the baptism of water; and his Spirit-baptism, by degrees, shall put an end to my water-baptism: And therefore, *Paul* (as you have heard) after he had used this baptism twice or thrice, quite forbore it, and yet planted many churches of Christ; and so probably, by degrees, did other Apostles too; for they knew that Christ's baptism included *John's*, and was fully sufficient of itself without it; and therefore we find *Paul* teaching in Christ's kingdom, but one baptism, and this the baptism of the Spirit: *Ephes.* iv. from which the church of the New-Testament, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was to take its beginning, and not from outward elements, or water-washing.

Wherefore, seeing these things are so, the *Anabaptists* have extremely mistaken, who have made their water-washing so essential a work of the New-Testament, that they would neither hear the word, nor have christian communion with any one that was not so washed; yea, though they were convinced, toughing them, that they had received the Spirit: This, I say, hath been the great error of very many honest and well-meaning people, through

misunderstanding the word, to make washing with material water so necessary a thing in spiritual worship; yea, and more essential to the communion of Saints, than the very Spirit itself; whom I do not therefore judge, but pity.

And thus much for water-baptism, which was *John's*, and belonged only to that middle ministry, betwixt the Prophets and Christ.

Now the other baptism I am to speak of, is Christ's, which is spirit or fire-baptism; and this is the one and only baptism of the New Testament, as we find *Paul* affirming, *Epes.* iv. 6. where he saith, that in Christ's kingdom, where is but one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling; one Lord and one faith, there is also but εν βαπτισμα, one baptism; and this is the baptism of the Spirit, as the apostle elsewhere shews, saying, 1. Cor. xii. 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been made all to drink into one Spirit.*

Now this Spirit-baptism did not go along with *John's* water-baptism, but followed it about four years after, as you have heard, and as appears by the forementioned place of Christ, *Acts* i. 5. where he tells his disciples, saying, *John verily baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence;* and this promise of Christ, and of the Father, was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, when the apostles being all met together, *there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Spirit*, &c. Here was the first beginning of Christ's, or Spirit-baptism; for it began not till after the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his sitting down on the throne of God; and *John* the apostle also witnesses to this, *chap.* vii. saying, *The Spirit was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified;* but as soon as he was glorified, then did he begin to baptize

with the Spirit, not the apostles only, but also the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and all sorts of people that did believe in his name, through the word of the gospel: So that, then Christ's baptism began to take place, and prevail, as you may see *Acts* viii. *When the apostles that were at Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God by the preaching of Philip, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit; for as yet he was fallen on none of them;* (only, saith the text, *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, i. e.* they had only been baptized with *John's* baptism, who only baptized with water, saying, that they should believe on Christ, that was to come after: For *John's* baptism was yet usual, inasmuch as Christ's baptism was but newly begun) *Then did the apostles lay their hands on them, and they received the holy Spirit:* So that here we see the progress of Spirit baptism. And after, when *Peter* preached to *Cornelius* and his family and friends, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, *Acts* x. And *Peter* gives this account to those of the circumcision at *Jerusalem*, Acts xi. 15. *And as I began to speak, the holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning; then remembered I the words of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized by the holy Spirit:* So that *Peter* evidently declares the gift of the Spirit, by the ministry of the gospel, to be the baptism of Christ, or the baptism of the holy Spirit and fire, which Christ promised at his ascension into heaven.

And this is the only baptism, wherein all the church of the New Testament are to partake with Christ; I say, not the baptism of water, but of the Spirit; he and we drinking into one Spirit, and the same Spirit descending on us as it did on him. The pouring out of the Spirit on the flesh of Christ, was his New Testament baptism, and it is ours too; and all our true and sound comfort and happi-

ness lies in this, that we are baptized with the same Spirit that He was; for it would be as little spiritual comfort to be dipped in the same water with Christ, as to eat with him at the same table, or to drink with him in the same cup, or to go along with him in the same ship, as *Judas* did, and divers of the unbelieving *Jews;* but to drink with him into one Spirit, is to partake of one flesh with him, and to be one Christ with him; and this is a comfort indeed.

Now the outward instrument of Christ's, or Spirit baptism, is not material water, but the word, as Christ shews, *Matt.* xxviii. where he saith, *Teach and baptize*, shewing that teaching the word is the outward means of baptizing with the Spirit. And again, *John* xvii. *Now are you clean through the word, not which Moses, but which I have spoken unto you*, (and therefore is the gospel called the ministration of the Spirit, because it proceeds from the Spirit, and communicates the Spirit;and Christ baptizes with the Spirit through the ministration of the Spirit, which is the preaching of the gospel) and *Eph.* v. 26. *Christ gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it* τω λυτρω τυ υδατος εν ρηματι, *with the washing of water by the word;* that is, Christ cleanses his church by such a washing of water, as is brought about by the word; and the water with which the word washes is the Spirit, for by the word the Spirit is given, and the word cleanses by the Spirit, and the Siprit by the word: And therefore it is also said, 1 *Cor.* vii. 1. *Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.*

From all this it appears, that Spirit-baptism is not to be performed by water, but by the word; and no man, under the New-Testament, receives the Spirit through the baptism of water, but through the ministry of the New-Testament, which is the only ministration of the Spirit.

To conclude, this baptism of the Spirit, that is performed only by the word, is that baptism of which so many excellent things are spoken in the New-testament. As,

1. This baptism of the Spirit gives a new nature, and this nature is a divine nature, or the nature of God; and hence it is said, *Except a man be born of water and the Spirit;* so that the baptism of the Spirit gives a new birth, and so a new nature: And again, *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit:* so that the baptism of the Spirit makes us Spirit, and through the baptism of the Spirit, we become that which the Spirit itself is: And so the true foundation of christianity begins from faith and the new creature, and not from water-washing.

2. This baptism gives a new name; not *John* or *Thomas*, &c. but as Christ saith, *Rev.* iii. 12, *I will write upon him* το ονυμα μυ το καινον, *my new name:* Our own is sin, and ignorance, and pride, and injustice, and envy, and covetousness, and uncleanness, and all evil; and this is the name which the first *Adam* wrote upon us; but the name the second *Adam* writes on us, is righteousness and holiness, and truth, and love, and meekness, and wisdom, and all good: and this is the name the second *Adam* writes on us, or his own new name; for Christ himself was baptized by the Spirit, into the name of God; that is, was taken up into God, and the things of God, which are himself, as into the truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, power, &c. and all the whole flesh or humanity of Christ, even all his members are baptized into the same name of God with Him, and so are called by his new name; so that this name of Christ, this new name which is given us by God, through the baptism of the Spirit, is infinitely better than that name which is given us by parents or godfathers in water-baptism.

3. Christ's baptism translates us into a new world: *Except a man be born of that water, which is the Spirit,*

he cannot enter intothe kingdom of God: No man can possibly enter into the church of the New-Testament, which is the kingdom of God, but through the baptisms of the Spirit; the baptism of the Spirit makes a new creature, and this new creature enters into a new world, which is the new *Jerusalem*, that comes down from God out of heaven.

4. Spirit-baptism qualifies us for the same work with Christ, that is, for the ministry of the New-Testament: saith Christ, the *Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach*, Isaiah lxi. 1. and he began his ministry from his Spirit-baptism, which did immediately follow his water-baptism, but was in no sort one baptism with it; and having, through the opening of the heavens, received the Spirit, which taught him the name of God, he presently began to teach the name of God to others; and Christ himself was not a minister of the New-Testament, but through the baptism of the Spirit. Now all believers that are anointed with him in his unction, or which is all one, are baptized with him in one baptism of the Spirit, are anointed and baptized to the same ministry. For the anointing of the Spirit is the teaching of God, and they that are taught of God themselves, ought also to teach others; and the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of prophecy, and they that have received that Spirit, must prophesy; as it is written, *It shall come to pass in the last days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy;* which very place, *Peter*, *Acts* ii. applies to the baptism of the Spirit: so that this Spirit-baptism of Christ, makes all prophets that partake of it.

5. Spirit-baptism makes all those one with Christ the Head, who partake of it, *Gal.* iii. 27. *As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; so that by the true baptism of the New-Testament, we do actually

put on Christ, and are made one with Christ: and this is not done by any water-washing, but by the Spirit; for through the gift of the Spirit only are we made one flesh with Christ; yea, through this we necessarily become one Spirit with him too; as it is said, *He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit;* so that not through water, but Spirit-baptism, do we put on Christ, the Spirit carrying us into Christ, and bringing Christ into us, and being one and the same Spirit in both; and this is truly to be baptized into Christ.

Now this baptism that makes us one with Christ, makes us to partake both of his death and resurrection.

1. Through baptism of the Spirit we are dipt into the death of Christ, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. *Know ye not, that so many of us as are baptized into Jesus Christ, are baptized into his death?* And this is, as the Apostle unfolds it, *ver.* 6. *The crucifying of the old man with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:* And all this is done, not through any water-washing, but through the gift of the Spirit; for it is through the Spirit only, that we are able to mortify the deeds of the flesh; and nothing but the presence of the Spirit in us, is the destruction of sin; so that the Spirit of Christ baptizes us into the death of Christ.

2. Spirit-baptism makes us partakers of his resurrection as well as of his death; yea, therefore do we die with him, that we may live a better life, *Rom.* vi. 4. *Therefore are we buried with him by baptism* (that is, Spirit-baptism) *into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father,* i. e. the Spirit, *so should we also live in newness of life; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* Where you see, that the same baptism of the Spirit that makes us die with Christ, doth also quicken us into his resurrection, and deprives us of

our own life; not that we may remain dead, but that it may communicate to us a better life than our own, even the life of Christ himelf; that we who are men, may live the very life of the Son of God in our own souls and bodies, and may be quickened with him, and raised up with him, and set in heavenly places in him.

6. As Spirit-baptism makes us one with Christ, the Head, so with the church, the body, 1 *Cor.* xii. 13. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit:* So that, by drinking into one Spirit with the church; we become one body with it, and no otherways: I say, not by being dipt into the same water, but by receiving the same Spirit, do we become one body with the church; and it is not the being of one judgment, or opinion, or form or the like, that makes men one true church or body of Christ; but the being of one Spirit; and none are of that church, which is the body of Christ but those who are baptized with that one Spirit of Christ.

7. Spirit-baptism truly washes and cleanses from sin: What water-baptism doth in the sign, this doth in the truth; even cleanses from all carnal and spiritual filthiness: and no man is cleansed from sin, but by the washing of the Spirit; the pouring forth of the Spirit on all flesh, is the killing of sin in all flesh, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9. 10, 11. *Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God; and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of our God:* So that Spirit-baptism cleanses from all sin, whatever it is; and there is no man cleansed from sin, but through this baptism.

And again, *Ephes.* v. 26, 27. *Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish;* and nothing doth thus purify the church, till it be without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, and till it be perfectly holy, but the baptism of the Spirit. And therefore, though the baptism of *John* was administered but once, yet the baptism of Christ is a continued baptism; for as long as corruption is in the flesh, the baptism of the Spirit is in use: So that the nature and life of a christian are under a constant and continual baptism, God every day pouring forth his Spirit upon a believer, for the purifying and sanctifying of him, and making him meet for the immediate presence of God, whither no unclean thing comes, nor the least uncleanness in any thing.

8. Spirit-baptism saves: whatever in us is washed with the Spirit, is saved as well as sanctified; and how much any one hath received of the Spirit, so much as he already saved, *Titus* iii. 5. *According to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:* Where the apostle teaches us how God saves, and that is, not by *John's* baptism, or water-washing, but by the laver of regeneration, which is the renewing of the holy Spirit, poured on us abundantly, through Christ: so that he calls the baptism of the Spirit, the laver of regeneration; such a laver as renews the old nature, yea, and begets a new one; so that a man, through this baptism, is wholly changed, not in a few good works, but in his whole nature; and from his newness of nature, flows newness of life; so that he is no more as he was, but is, and lives, and loves, and thinks, and speaks, and acts, otherways than he was wont; and this cannot be the

work of water in any measure, but wholly of the Spirit; for where men are destitute of the Spirit, though washed with water a thousand times, there is no change of nature in them; but the change of nature wrought by Spirit-baptism, is so much present salvation, even in this present world. There is another Scripture that witnesses the same thing; and it is 1 *Peter* iii. 20. *A few* (that is, eight souls) *were saved by water: the like figure (whereunto baptism answering), doth now also save us; not that whereby the filth of the flesh is cast away, but whereby a good conscience answers well to God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* *Peter* having said that baptism answers to the flood, and saves the church now, as the flood did the church then; yea saith he, but I mean not the outward baptism, or the washing away of the filth of the body, but the *answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:* Which place is difficult; but I thus conceive it. The efficacy of Christ's resurrection is the gift of the Spirit, and the Spirit of Christ in a believer, rectifies his conscience, and makes it good; so that it can return a sweet answer to God, upon every word of his; for the work of the Spirit in the heart, answers every word of faith spoken from God; particularly it can say to God, "I was indeed filthy and unclean throughout, but I am now washed, and justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God;" and this Spirit-batism is that which saves, and not the water, which puts away the filth of the flesh only, but leaves the filth of the Spirit as much as ever.

So that, in this place, *Peter* puts an end to baptism in the flesh, as *Paul*, Rom. ii. 28. puts an end to circumcision in the flesh, saying, *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcisoin which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in*

the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God: That is, saith *Paul*, in the kingdom of Christ, where all things are spiritual, circumcision in the Spirit puts an end to circumsion in the flesh: and in the same kingdom of Christ, saith *Peter*, baptism in the Spirit, puts an end to baptism in the flesh; for he is not a christian who is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh: but he is a christian who is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise, also, is not of men, but of God. For under the gospel, which is the ministration of the Spirit (as ye have been oft minded) we can find nothing among all outward things, through the use and exercise whereof, we may attain to the cleanness and purity of righteousness in our natures: and therefore Christ hath put an end to all outward, carnal, and earthly things of the first Testament, by the inward, spiritual, and heavenly things of a second and better Testament: And by his own death and resurrection only, not without us, but within us, through the power and efficacy of his Spirit, all the baptism of the New-Testament is fully and perfectly performed.

And thus, in all these particulars, you see the infinite excellency and glory of the Spirit-baptism, above water-baptism: and this only is sufficient in the days of the gospel, as being the true and proper baptism of the New-Testament: For as Christ himself only, is sufficient to the faithful without *John*, though *John* were of use in his season, to point out Christ; so the baptism of Christ only, is sufficient to the faithful, without the baptism of *John*, though the baptism of *John* were of use in its season, to point out the baptism of Christ; and the baptist himself was of this judgment, who said to Christ, *I have need to be baptized of thee;* which he means, not of water-baptism (for so Christ himself, as you have heard, did not baptize) but of the baptism of the Spirit; and so the *Baptist* himself,

who was never baptized with water, neither by Christ nor the Apostles, nor any body else, yet was baptized with the Spirit, and the baptism of the Spirit was sufficient for the baptist, without any water-baptism; and so Christ's Spirit-baptism by the word, is sufficient for all the faithful now, without *John's* water-baptism; for he that is truly washed from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit, and hath the Holy Ghost in him to renew his nature, and to conform him exactly to Christ's own image, and to work him in this present world, into the true similitude of heaven, and to be in him a *fountain of water, springing up unto everlasting life*, what need hath he of cold material water to be poured on his body, under the pretence of any sign whatever, either of *Moses* or *John*, when-as, he hath the truth, substance, and heavenly thing itself?

Now this, it may be, may seem strange and dangerous to some of low, and fleshly, and customary religion; but let all such (if it be possible) consider, that where the substance comes, the shadow is at an end; and the ceremony where the truth comes; and the creature were God comes: And if they understand not this for the present, I hope they may understand it afterwards; for we speak not at uncertainties in this point, what we have in some measure *seen, and felt, and handled of the word of life, that we deliver to you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and his son Jesus Christ*, through the Spirit.

Isaiah lviii. 12.

And they that shall be of thee (that is, of the church that is born of the Spirit) *shall build the old waste places*, (made such by the church that is born of the flesh) *thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations* (by the clear revealing of Christ, his kingdom and all his things, according to the ministration of the Spirit) *and thou shalt be called the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in.* (Here Christ writes upon the forementioned church his own new name.)

THE

TRIAL OF SPIRITS,

BOTH IN

TEACHERS AND HEARERS;

Wherein is held forth, the clear Discovery and certain Downfall,

OF THE

CARNAL AND ANTICHRISTIAN CLERGY OF THESE NATIONS;

TESTIFIED FROM THE WORD OF GOD,

TO THE

UNIVERSITY-CONGREGATION IN CAMBRIDGE.

BY WILLIAM DELL.

Whereunto is added,

A plain and necessary Confutation of divers gross Errors, delivered by Mr. Sydrach Simpson,

IN A SERMON, PREACHED TO THE SAME CONGREGATION, AT THE COMMENCEMENT, ANNO 1653.

Wherein, among other things, is declared, that the Universities (according to their present Statutes and Practices) are not (as he affirmed) answerable to the Schools of the Prophets, in the time of the Law; but rather to the Idolatrous High Places.

And that Humam Learning, is not a Preparation appointed by Christ either for the right understanding, or right teaching the Gospel.

With a brief Testimony against Divinity-Degrees in the Universities.

As also Luther's testimony at large upon the whole matter.

And lastly, The right reformation of Learning, Schools, and Universities, according to the State of the Gospel, and the Light that shines therein.

All necessary for the Instruction and Direction of the Faithful, in these last times.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To all the truly faithful, the very little Flock of Christ in these Nations, now despised, and almost worn out (according to the prophecies) for the word of God, and Testimony which they hold.

Grace be multiplied unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our head and Hope.

I Could not choose but distinguish you thus, from all the rest of the people of these nations, of what condition or quality soever, seeing God himself hath first done it, having chosen you to himself in Christ, and set you apart for himself, as a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And I have chosen to speak this only to you, because ye are all taught of God, and have heard and learned from Him, the truth as it is in Jesus: And because you have an inward unction from God, whereby you know the truth from error, though it be never so much reproached by carnal christians; and whereby you know error from the truth, though it be never so much exalted and magnified by them. You are those spiritual men, who judge all things, because you have received the word and Spirit of judgment in Christ, from the Father. Besides, you are the men whom God will use in his greatest and most glorious works, which he hath yet to do in the world; to wit, in the destruction of the kingdom of antichrist, and in the setting up, and enlarging the kingdom of Christ; which things are not to be done by the might and power of worldly magistrates (which, it may be, you have not received; and if you had, it would not be helpful here) but by the Spirit of the Lord, which you

all have received in some measure. Yea farther, none but you will be contented to live only by faith, and to follow Christ in untrodden paths, and to undertake impossible works to flesh and blood; and none but you will be willing to have the residue of Christ's life and works, and of his sufferings and death, fulfilled in your mortal bodies.

You christians are called chosen and faithful, and you will still be found with the Lamb on Mount Sion, and with the first who have his name, and his Father's name, written in their foreheads; and you dare still to own the ancient truth, cause and work of Christ, how great disadvantage soever, is, for the present, risen up against it, through the apostacy of carnal christians, the lovers of this world. And you all know, that all that hath been done hitherto by the sword, is but the preparation of Christ's way to his work; and that the work itself is still behind, and to be done by those worthies of the Lord, who love Jesus Christ and his kingdom, and coming, a thousand times better than the present world, and all the best things of it; yea, than their own lives. Wherefore I advise you all, to whom now I speak, to take heed that you neither drink nor sip of the clergies cup, which carries in it the wine of the wrath of the fornification of antichrist; lest, having drunk thereof, you fall asleep through the strength of their inchantments, and so are rendered unable to follow Christ any farther. For many powers and magistrates of the world, once hopeful, have been thus overcome and seduced into antichrist's cause against Christ, to their utter ruin in the end. And how have the present clergy, with their most plausible men, attempted some of this present power; yea, some of the very chiefest and most godly in the army; and have put them into some (that I say not great) danger! Wherefore remember you, that word of the Lord, spoken by his Angel, *Rev.* xiv. 9, 10. *If any*

man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, &c.

If any man worship the beast, that is, the antichristian church of the pope, and his prelates and clergy, which is called the beast, because of its fierceness and cruelty against the saints: or his image, that is, the church of the bishops and presbyters, which, in a lesser volume, and less letters, doth answer the other and is directly like it. Whoever shall worship these, that is, highly esteem them for their human learning, and school divinity, and sacredness of their orders, and count them worthy all honour and respect, and worldly maintenance; and also to have power in matters of religion, to allow and determine of doctrine, and to appoint and institute in matters of government: and being worldly powers, do subject themselves, and all the worldly people under them, to these men's religion, authority, doctrine, discipline, &c. whosoever shall thus worship them, or shall receive his mark, that is, this principle, that, it is lawful to punish and persecute men in matters that merely relate to faith and the gospel, and this under pretence of the glory of God, and good of christian people; which is the beast's mark in every age, and under every change of outward form: whoever shall receive this mark in their forehead, that is, to profess this doctrine only: or in their hand, that is, to execute it according to laws, which the nations have been seduced to make to this purpose: *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoak of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.*

Wherefore you faithful ones have great cause to be very well advised in these things, seeing the chief design of antichrist is to seduce the elect; seeing he hath nobody else in all the world that dare oppose him, or know how to do it, but you: And he knows, if he can prevail with you, all the world besides will follow him headlong, as the *Gergesenes* swine ran into the sea, and were choaked.

Now I have adventured, through the inspiration of the Almighty, to undertake openly and plainly against the clergy and universities, which, in their present state, are the residue of the hour and power of darkness upon the nations: And the Lord, of his grace, hath helped me through this work, by his Spirit of counsel and might. And so I have freely and willingly exposed myself for Christ and his truth's sake, to all the reproaches, slanders, revilings, contradictions, and (if their power shall serve) persecutions of the universities and clergy; and of all those people, high and low, bond and free, who have received their mark, and worship them: Choosing rather to suffer with Christ, and with you, his seed, all manner of tribulations, than to reign with them; and much rather embracing christian communion, with poor plain husbandmen and tradesmen, who believe in Christ, and have received his Spirit, than with the heads of universities, and highest, and stateliest of the clergy, who, under a specious form of godliness, do yet live in true enmity and opposition to the gospel.

I do indeed, freely acknowledge, that I have often been ready to complain to God, in the anguish of my spirit, that he had called me, a very bruised reed, to a more difficult task, in one respect, than either *Wickliffe*, *Hus* or *Luther*, those strong pillars in the house of God; to wit, because much of the gross body of antichristianism, against which they chiefly engaged, being done away by their ministry, there still remains the cunning and subtil soul and spirit

thereof, which yet is all in all, in antichrist's kingdom, though it be farther removed from the knowledge and notice of the common sort of christians. And so the mystery of iniquity is now become more mysterious and deceiving than in their times; And as perfect and bitter enmity against Christ and his spirit, and the true temple of God, the spiritual church, as ever was in all their times, doth now prevail under the name of orthodox doctrine, and the reformation of religion, by the late Assembly of Divines, which the clergy are all now ready to set up, if they could gain the secular arm to strengthen them thereunto, (of which now they have greatest hopes) and without which, their religion can find no high place in this world.

Now herein the old mystery of iniquity is renewed amongst these men, that they would have an outward letter and ministry, without the Spirit of Christ, to be the doctrine and ministry of the New-Testament, which is the ministration of the Spirit, and not of the letter: And would have the secular magistrate to have right and power to enforce men to such a religion, as himself judges true, by the help and counsel of those ministers, which himself judges orthodox: As if some men were able to teach spiritual things, and all to understand them, by natural reason made use of, and improved; which yet these men deny *in terminis*, whilst they assert it in the principle. For they will not leave it to the Father, to draw whom he pleaseth to the Son; neither will they leave it to the Spirit, to choose what living stones he pleaseth, to build them together to be the habitation of God: But the ecclesiastical state, having seduced the temporal, to make them believe, that the magistrate's worldly power, in union with their worldly religion, may make a national church of all, that they, between themselves, please; and may allow, and set up, such a doctrine for orthodox,

which these men, who are in academical degrees, and ecclesiastical orders, do approve for such; though the Spirit of God, in all believers testifies that these men have not the mind of Christ, but of Antichrist, in all they teach, and act, and counsel; in their assemblies, churches, doctrine, ordinances, works, duties, days, times, fastings, thanksgivings, and every thing else: Yet these having the outward carcass, or appearance of religion, though destitute of the inward soul of it, which is true faith, and the Spirit of God, do cozen, not only the meaner people, but the very magistrates of the world; who are glad to hear, that the clergy have given them such high power in the kingdom of Christ, and made them magistrates in both worlds; though indeed, in the end, it be not for the magistrates advantage, but wholly for the clergies.

And thus is the mystery of iniquity grown more mysterious now than heretofore. But this is our comfort and help, that God still causes his light to shine forth proportionally to his people, to discover every new change and form of the mystery of iniquity. And though the mystery of iniquity, in every age, is mysterious enough, to cozen all the unbelieving world, though never so wise and learned; yet is it never able to deceive the faithful, who have always sufficient light from God to discover it, and sufficient grace to overcome it.

And now, you faithful and beloved ones, to whom I have spoken all this, stand you fast, and depart not from Christ, his word, and work (all which you know in faith) for any good or evil things that may befall you in this short life; but finish in faith and patience, the work which God hath given you to do, in your several places, waiting for the glory which shall be given you at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; in whom I remain, though most unworthy,

Your humble and faithful Servant in the Gospel,

W. D.

THE TRIAL OF SPIRITS.

I JOHN IV. 1—6.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone forth into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard, that it should come, and even now already it is in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

In this scripture we may take notice of these six things.

1. The apostle gives notice to the beloved congregation of spiritual christians, of a great evil risen up in the world, which (if not carefully heeded) might occasion some great trouble and danger to them; *Many false prophets*, saith he, *are gone out into the world*, ver. 1.

2. He prescribes them a sufficient remedy against this evil, saying, *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.*

3. That the faithful might be able to make a right judgment of spirits, he gives them one short rule of trial, which yet comprehends in itself all rules: *ver.* 2, 3.

"Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God," &c.

4. He shews them with whom these false prophets, who have the spirit of antichrist, should not prevail; to wit, with none of the true children of God; *ver.* 4. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

5. He shews them with whom the false prophets should prevail, to wit, with the world and carnal people; *ver.* 5. "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." The world seeking its own things, receives antichrist, and his prophets.

6. He shews how the spirit of truth and error may be known in the people, as well as in the teachers; to wit, by the people's cleaving, either to the teachers of truth, or to the teachers of error; *ver.* 6. "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth uot us; hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

These six things are held forth to us in this scripture, and they are all very profitable and necessary for the true church to be acquainted withal, especially in these last of the latter times. I shall begin with the first; which is,

FIRST POINT.

The great and dangerous evil of which the Apostle gives notice to the church of believers, and that is, the going out of false prophets into the world.

Many false prophets are gone out into the world.

And here it is to be noted, that from the very beginning of the world, there have been two seeds or generations of men, very contrary the one to the other, as is evident in *Gen.* iii. 15. where God saith to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." The seed of one of these, are called the

sons of God, of the other, the sons of man ; *Gen.* vi. 6. And both these, being the children of one *Adam*, according to the flesh, are yet distinguished by several spirits, that dwell in them, and inspire them : For the Spirit of God, that is, the Spirit of righteousness and truth, doth inspire the one, and these are truly called the children of God, as *Paul* saith, *Rom.* viii. " as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God". And the spirit of Satan, which is the spirit of wickedness and error, doth inspire the other ; and these are truly called the sons of men, who all have sinned, and are deprived of the glory of God.

Now these two different and contrary spirits, which have dwelt in these two distinct seeds, have acted from the beginning of the world, each one according to his own nature ; and to trade and traffick with mankind, and out of them, to bring forth children to themselves, like to themselves in all things ; and so one hath endeavoured to beget and bring forth the children of God, and of truth ; the other the children of men, and of error : And to this end, the one hath held forth the truth of God, by the true Spirit of God ; the other hath held forth error and falsehood, yet as if it were the truth : The one hath endeavoured to bring man unto God, through true faith and repentance ; the other to turn men from God through sin : The one hath sought to work salvation in men, the other destruction.

Now the false spirit hath been the most common in the world, and hath had the greatest opportunities and advantages to multiply itself, seeing it finds the whole world already lying in wickedness, and fully prepared to receive itself. But the true Spirit hath been found in very few, and that from the beginning ; for there have been but few true prophets, who have had the true Spirit, and have spoken the true word, as you may see all along in the scriptures, especially in the times of *Elijah* and *Micajah ;* but Christ

saith, *Many false prophets shall arise, and deceive many;* and *Peter* saith, in his second epistle, *chap.* ii. 1, 2. "That, as there were false prophets among the people, that is the Jews, so there shall be false doctors and teachers among the christians, who should privily bring in damnable heresies, and that many should follow their pernicious ways."

So that, as there has been many false prophets from the beginning, so especially in the days of the New Testament; for the more Christ hath appeared, by his Spirit, to lead men into truth, the more hath the devil appeared, by his spirit, to lead men into error, and this is properly called antichrist; for flesh and blood is not antichrist, but a spirit contrary to Christ's Spirit, that dwells in flesh and blood, and chiefly among those that profess the christian religion: This is antichrist.

No spirit, in the Jews or Gentiles, is properly called antichrist; but the spirit of Satan, in false christians, appearing as an angel of light, this is antichrist. Before Christ came in the flesh, the devil was an evil spirit, and a liar, and a murderer, and the unclean spirit, and prince of this world; but he was not properly antichrist, because Christ was not then come in the flesh. The devil was the devil before, and did dwell and work in evil men; but from the beginning of the christian church, he is called antichrist, and that not every where, but in the church or kingdom of Christ: For antichrist is a spirit that dissolves Jesus, and that not openly, but subtilly and cunningly, yea, under the name and pretence of Jesus, he is wholly contrary to him. Wherefore, the discerning of spirits, as it has been necessary from the beginning of the world, so also it is especially necessary in the days of the gospel, wherein the mystery of iniquity is become most mysterious, through the operation of antichrist, in those *many false prophets which are gone forth into the world.* And so we proceed to the second point.

SECOND POINT.

And that is, That sufficient remedy, which the Apostle prescribes to the true church, against that great evil, of many false prophets being gone out into the world.

Now the remedy the Apostle prescribes to the faithful against these false prophets, is not, that they should stir up the secular power, to imprison, banish or burn them, that so they might be rid of them; for this is antichrist's proper remedy against those that oppose him; but the Apostle shews a more christian remedy, which is this, *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God*; and this remedy alone is sufficient for the true spiritual church of the faithful in every age, to preserve it safe and sound against all false teachers whatsoever, and their false doctrines: neither doth it desire, or need any other. Wherefore in this case, the Apostle contents himself to give only this caution to the faithful, *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.*

Believe not every spirt, &c. that is, every one that speaketh of spiritual things. Whence it is plain, that we neither ought rashly and hastily to believe every man's doctrine, nor yet rashly and unadvisedly to censure and condemn it, till it be heard and known what it is: But it is a christian's duty to *prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good*, upon proof, as *Paul* adviseth; wherefore *John* also adds here, *But try the spirits, whether they be of God.*

Whence we note, that christians have right and power to try and judge the spirits and doctrines of their teachers; and this is evident by many plain scriptures, as,

Matt. vii. 15. "Beware of false prophets (saith Christ to the faithful) which come unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; ye shall know them by their fruits."

Matt. xvi. 6. "Jesus said to them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Matt. xxiv. 4. "Jesus said, Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many."

John x. "My sheep hear my voice, and know my voice, and a stranger will they not hear, but flee from him, for they know not (that is, own not) the voice of strangers. And all that came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them."

By all which scriptures, and many more that might be added, it is manifest, that the faithful, the true sheep of Christ, have right and power to judge of the spirits and doctrines of the teachers.

Let fathers, schoolmen, doctors, councils, assemblies of divines, universities, ministers, propound and publish what doctrine they please, the sheep of Christ, the faithful flock, have power and authority from Christ himself, to try and judge, whether the things they speak be of Christ, or of themselves and of antichrist. And this power the faithful people ought not to part with, neither for any fear, nor for any favour.

Yea, it most nearly concerns the faithful, to try the spirits, and judge the doctrines of the teachers, for these two considerations among others.

First, Because we must each one give an account for ourselves before the judgment-seat of Christ: Wherefore it concerns every one of us, to look to our own eternal condition, and not to leave this care to others for us. In death and judgment, each one must answer for himself; and therefore we ought to be as certain of the word of God, on which we build our immortal souls, as we are sure we live, and are creatures; we ought, I say, to be sure ourselves, and not to trust any body for us, in this great matter whereon depends either eternal life, or eternal death.

Secondly, It concerns us to try the spirits and doctrines, because otherwise we may easily mistake, and instead of antichrist and his disciples, dash against Christ himself, and his precious saints. Yea, we have seen how the world and worldly church, not being able to try the spirits and doctrines, have contradicted and crucified the Son of God himself, and have reproached and persecuted all his people, who are baptized into one spirit with him; and doing this, they have thought they have done God good service too; and all because they were not able to judge of the Spirit and truth of Christ in himself and his members; but have followed the judgment and counsel of the chief guides in the outward church, who have caused them to err, and to mistake truth for error, and error for truth, Christ for antichrist, and antichrist for Christ.

Wherefore it concerns every one, to be wise to salvation for himself, and to try the spirits for himself, and not to content himself to say, thus said *Augustine*, *Ambrose*, *Hierom*, &c. or this was the judgment of the fathers, or thus have the councils and universities determined, or thus do our ministers teach us; but if thou art one of Christ's flock, thou must have skill to know and judge for thyself, which is Christ's Spirit and doctrine, and which is antichrist's; otherwise thou wilt certainly miscarry in this great matter, and be undone for ever. If thou build on men in these things, and canst not judge for thyself, thou wilt be sure to be undone.

But now this power of trying of spirits, and judging doctrines, which Christ hath given his true flock, and which they ought to have upon so good grounds; the teachers of the false and antichristian church, that is, the common clergy, distinguished by several names, titles, and degrees, have robbed them of; and have falsely and treacherously arrogated to themselves, the power of trying spirits, and judging doctrines; and have said, that it

belongs to the clergy or national ministry, and their councils, and assemblies of divines, to judge of spirits, whether they be right or false; and to judge of doctrines, whether they be agreeable to God's word, or not; and that all christians ought to expect their judgment and determination, and to submit to it, and to depend on it, as on an oricle from heaven, yea, though it be, not only without, but also against their own particular judgment.

And these men (I mean the clergy) through the ecclesiastical and temporal power which they had gotten, have stricken great fear into the whole world, and have miserably vexed innumerable consciences, with a grievous and lasting bondage, and have even driven them to dispair, whilst none durst approve or own any spirit or doctrine, though never so manifestly of Christ and his gospel, without their allowance and approbation; so mightily hath the power of antichrist prevailed in the world, and that against the express word of Christ.

Now the ground of this their antichristian pride and usurpation, is this, that they arrogate to themselves, that they are the guides and shepherds of all christian men, and are to teach them the gospel, which they are only to receive from their lips; whereas Christ hath promised his true church, that they shall be all taught of God, and shall hear and learn themselves from the Father, and hath also promised to send to them the Spirit, to lead them in all truth, and to give them an anointing, to teach them all things.

Now they, by robbing the faithful of this power, and arrogating it to themselves, have made themselves, contrary to Christ's command, lords and masters in the church of God, and have usurped to themselves superiority and authority over other believers, and have subjected all the world to their opinion and judgment in the things of God: by which means, they have set wide open the floodgates to antichrist and his kingdom, to break in upon

the world, and to overflow it, whilst they had robbed all christian people of their own judgment in all the things of God, and had made them to depend wholly on the judgment of the clergy.

And had not christian people thus unchristianly delivered up their judgments to the clergy, and that in the very highest points of religion, christianity had not been so miserably blinded and corrupted as it is, and the mystery of iniquity had not so much prevailed in the world, as now it hath. For when christians would not try the spirits, whether they were of God, and the doctrines, whether they were the word of God or no, but thought this a matter too high for them, and would refer and submit all to the judgment of their ministers; then antichrist (the apostle of the devil) came forth boldly, and proudly exalted himself above all that is called God; and his kingdom, above all the kingdoms of the world; having first put out both the eyes of christians, by taking away from them their right and power of trying spirits, and judging doctrines.

But when true christians shall search the scriptures (as God I trust, hath now fully put into their hearts to do) and shall justly and lawfully take to themselves the power which God hath given them, to try spirits and doctrines, then antichrist, and his agents, the carnal clergy, must soon be brought down: for the faithful, by that word shall soon perceive, that they are not of God, nor their doctrine of that right gospel, which is after the mind of Christ.

Well then, by what hath been said, you, who are of Christ's true sheep, may perceive, that it is evident by the word, that faithful christians have right and power to try spirits and doctrines, though antichrist, for many ages, hath robbed them of this privilege.

For (that I may speak a little more to this matter) the trial of spirits doth unquestionably belong to all men who have received the Spirit of God: for to this Spirit of God which dwells in the faithful, the gift of discerning spirits is inseparably annexed; and the Spirit of Christ, which truly dwells in all true christians, cannot deceive, nor be deceived in the trial of spirits. So that this now is a common grace, that in some measure belongs to all true christians, who have received the unction that teacheth them all things, and is true, and is no lie.

And though there be in the church diversities of gifts from the same spirit, which are given to some, and not to others, as tongues, and interpretation of tongues, and miracles, and gifts of healing, &c. mentioned by *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* xii. yet this gift of trying spirits, is given to all, in some measure, that have received the Spirit. For, as in the natural body there are several gifts given to several members, which are not given to all the members, as seeing to the eye, hearing to the ear, walking to the foot, &c. but feeling is given to all the members; so also in the body of Christ, that is, the spiritual church, several gifts are given to several saints, but the trial of spirits and doctrines to all saints, who have received the Spirit; and *if* any *have not Christ's Spirit, he is none of his;* and if any have Christ's Spirit, he can, in some measure, discern and judge of all spirits in the world: and the more any man receives Christ's Spirit, the more able is he to judge of all other spirits.

Wherefore, they who are true believers, and have received Christ's Spirit, their judgment is to be preferred in the trial of spirits, before the judgment of a whole council of clergymen.

And they only, who can try spirits by the Spirit of God, and doctrines by the word of God, written in their hearts by the Spirit, are fit to commend ministers to the work of

God: that is, the congregations of the faithful, and not universities, and assemblies of divines.

And thus you may perceive, that *seeing many false prophets are gone out into the world*, it concerns the faithful, as they tender their own everlasting salvation, not to believe every spirit that speaks of Christ, and his kingdom, and his things, but to *try the spirits, whether they be of God.*

Objection. But now (it may be) some will be ready to say, We ought indeed to try the spirits, seeing there are many false prophets in the world; but we hope there are no such persons among us, but only some upstart men, with their new light, who, with their novelties and fancies, trouble the nation, and would fain turn all things upside down; and we know these well enough already, and do sufficiently despise them.

Answer. It is very like you do; but yet let me say to you, men, brethren and fathers, understand yourselves, and know what you do in this matter. For at the beginning of the reformation by the ministry of *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Calvin*, and divers others, precious servants of Jesus Christ, the popish clergy applied all these scriptures, *Try the spirits whether they be of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world; and beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves;* I say, these, and the like places of scripture, they applied to these godly men, and yet they themselves were the false prophets indeed, and the other, whom they termed such, were true ones. Wherefore it is possible for you to be mistaken as well as they; and no doubt but you will be mistaken, except the Lord be gracious unto you, and give you his own Spirit, by which alone you can make a right judgment in this matter.

Wherefore, that he that reads may understand, you must know, that the false prophets are not so easily discerned as you think; for they seem to be true prophets.

and godly, holy, learned, orthodox men, men of eminence and renown in church and state: and so, to flesh and blood, and the wisdom and religion of the world, it will be a difficult, yea, an impossible thing to find them out: for the false prophets have several glorious veils over them, to hide and obscure them from common knowledge.

Wherefore we declare unto you from the word of the Lord, touching these false prophets, who shall do so much mischief,

1. That they shall not proceed, or come forth from among the Jews or Turks, or out of the barbarous nations; but they shall arise out of such as are called christians.

2. Seeing, among christians, some are openly prophane and evil, others seem to be religious and godly; the false prophets shall be found among the better sort; and therefore, saith Christ, *they shall come in sheeps clothing*, as if they were of Christ's own flock: and *Paul* saith, *they have a form of godliness*, that is, they shall be painted over gloriously, with all appearances of truth, righteousness, honesty, goodness, and all the names of godliness.

3. Seeing amongst those that seem to be the better sort of christians, some give themselves to the ministry of the word, and some do not; the false prophet shall be found among those christians who take upon themselves to be preachers, as *Paul* testifies, *Acts* xx. where, having called together the elders and teachers of the church of *Ephesus*, he saith to them, *ex vobis ipsis, out of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

4. And seeing, among those who are ministers, some are light, and vain, and carnal, and formal persons, and others are men of great worth and reputation, and seem to be the precious members of Christ, and even pillars in the church, so that the common people think, that all

religion would go down with such good men, they having some gifts and enlightenings of the Spirit, and seeming more than ordinarily godly, religious, wise, holy, sober, devout; now the false prophets shall be found among these. And as they who opposed Christ at his first coming in the flesh, seemed more wise, and holy, and eminent in the church than the rest, as the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in *Moses'* chair, and had the outward letter of the word in all exactness, and the outward form of religion in all strictness; so they, who do, and shall most oppose Christ in his coming in his Spirit, and shall contradict his word, and resist his servants and witnesses of his truth, do, and shall appear more wise, holy, learned, and godly, than the rest of the teachers of the church.

And thus you see, that the false prophets of antichrist shall arise among christians, and among such christians as seem to be godly; and among such seeming godly christians as preach the word; and among such preachers of the word as seem to be of greater worth and eminence than the rest: and so in all these respects it will be a hard matter to discern them.

2. Again, such persons, of such appearance of worth and holiness as these, do usually get to their side, the greatest and highest persons in the kingdoms and nations, and do obtain, not only their countenance and favour, but also their power and authority for themselves.

3. By both these means (to wit, their seeming holiness, and their interest with worldly powers) they exceedingly enlarge their credit and reputation with the world, and do get multitudes of people and nations to entertain them.

For antichrist could not deceive the world with a company of foolish, weak, ignorant, prophane, contemptible persons, but he always hath the greatest, wisest, holiest, and most eminent in the visable church for him; and by

these he seduces and subjects to himself, even the whole world.

Besides, they that are against him and his false prophets, are but a very handful of saints, who have the Spirit of Christ, and through his Spirit discern them, and oppose them, and for so doing are despised and hated of all the world.

Wherefore it is a harder matter to try these false prophets, than we are well aware of. And yet, as hard as it is, the Apostle, by the Spirit, hath given us a manifest and certain rule of trial: and this is the third general thing I named.

THE THIRD POINT.

To wit, The sufficient rule, whereby the true church may thoroughly try the spirits and prophets, how cunningly and subtilly soever they are disguised; and this he lays down, *verse* 3.

Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; &c.

Now this scripture we may understand two ways.

1. Of a right knowledge of Jesus Christ in his own person.

2. Of a true receiving of this Christ into us by faith.

1. Of the right knowledge of Christ in his own person.

1. For whereas he saith, *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, &c. this gives us to understand that he is true God, and was before he came into the flesh.

2. Whereas he saith, *Every spirit that confesseth that Christ is come in the flesh;* this gives us to understand that he is true man, our very brother, partaker of the same flesh and blood with us.

3. Whereas he saith, *every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, &c. this also gives us to understand, that in him, true God and true man are united into one inseparable person.

4 Whereas he saith, *every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, &c. this gives us occasion to consider the end of his coming; seeing God did not become man in vain, or for some slight cause; but that he might redeem unto God, and save perfectly, from the law, sin, death, and hell: And hence we may rise up to conceive of his offices, to wit, of his priestly, prophetical, and kingly office, and of the infinite virtue and efficacy of them.

Now he that makes this confession of Jesus Christ, from the revelation of the Father, is of God; and he that speaks otherwise, is not of God.

2. But secondly, we may understand this scripture, not only of the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, but also and especially of the true receiving of him by faith: *Every spirit*, saith he, *that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God:* that is, he is of God, that believes and acknowledges that the Son of the living God is come, not only into that humanity of Christ that was born of the Virgin, but also, that he is come into us, and dwells in us; according to these scriptures; *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith:* And *Christ in you, the hope of glory:* And *know ye not, that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates*, &c. Wherefore the true prophets do not only acknowledge that Jesus Christ is come into his own flesh, but also into theirs, which by this means is made his; and that Christ is in them of a truth, and dwells in them.

For antichrist himself, and his ministers, do all acknowledge, that Jesus Christ is come into that flesh which he did assume of the Virgin, but they will not confess that

this is true in him, and in us: They will acknowledge the mystery of God manifested in the flesh, as to Christ the head, but they will deny it, as to the church his body: and so, whilst they separate the head from the body, and the body from the head in this mystery, they do *solvere Jesum*, they dissolve Jesus.

I say, some hold, that the eternal Word, or divine nature, came indeed into that flesh which was born of the blessed Virgin, but they will by no means allow it to come into ours, through our union with him by faith; only they say, some created habits or gifts of grace come into us, or in our flesh, but not Christ himself, or the divine nature, or Son of the living God. And so these men set up these created gifts and graces in the members, instead of Christ himself the head.

And yet these teachers make a glorious shew in the flesh; and this is antichrist, to wit, when men think that these created habits of grace (which they fancy) will renew, comfort, sanctify, and save them; and so do make to themselves of them a glorious, but yet a false Christ.

Wherefore let us know, that he that denies Jesus Christ in the members, is, though not so great, yet as true antichrist, as he that denies Jesus Christ in the head: and he that denies Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, to be, and to be alone wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to us, as he that denies him to be the power, wisdom, and righteousness of God in himself.

The sum of the matter is this, that the true Spirits or prophets do acknowledge, not only that Christ, the Son of the living God, is come into that Son of man which was born of the blessed Virgin; but also that Christ is come into them, and dwells in them, as in his own true and proper members.

And so, he that hath Jesus Christ dwelling in his heart, is a true prophet; and he that hath not Christ dwelling

in his heart, is a false prophet, though his knowledge and religion be never so high, and glorious, and holy also in the opinion of the world. And this is the chief sign and mark, whereby we may know the true prophets and true christians, from the false prophets and false christians.

Objection. Now if any shall say, but how shall we know whether a man hath Christ dwelling in his heart or no ? and so consequently, whether he be a true or false prophet?

I *answer*, You shall certainly know it, by the truth of the word of Christ, in reference to his office in the word.

1. First then, the true prophets are to be discerned from the false.

By the truth of the word of God in them.

For the true prophets speak the true word of God, even the word of wisdom, the word of righteousness, the word of life, the word of power, the word that is able to save, which is the true gospel word. For this is the covenant that God hath made with Christ and his seed, saying, *Isaiah* lix. 21. *My Spirit, which is upon thee, and my word which is in thy mouth, shall never depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, from henceforth and for ever.*

And this was perfectly fulfilled in Christ; for that word which, in the beginning was with God, and was God, was made flesh in him, and dwelt in him; and out of that word, Jesus Christ spake all that ever he spake; his whole doctrine did flow from that eternal Word which dwelt in him.

And Christ communicated to the disciples the same word which he had received, as he saith, *John* xvii. 8. *I have gaven to them the words that thou givest me*, (that is, the words of righteousness and life) *and they have received them and have known surely, that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me;* and so that word, which they themselves received by faith, they also

held forth to others, as *John* saith, 1 *John* i. 1. *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.*

And to this also *John* the Baptist gives testimony, *John* iii. 34. Where he saith, *He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God*; not the words of men, or angels, but of God: and this is true, both in Christ, and in his seed.

But now the false prophets speak not the word of God, for they have it not in their hearts; but what word they have in their hearts, that they speak; and so they speak the words of their own reason, wisdom, and righteousness, or of other mens; but beyond human things they do not go, whether they pretend to high notions on the one hand, or to sound orthodox doctrine on the other hand.

Now of this, true christians are to take special notice; because, as the true word of God is the greatest commodity to the church that can be, and brings the presence of Christ, and all the things of Christ along with it; so the word of man is the greatest mischief to the church that can be; for it brings antichrist, and his kingdom, and all his things along with it. And thus doth vain philosophy, and school divinity (which is an unlawful mixing of philosophy with the outward letter of the word) pervert all things in the church of carnal and false christians.

2. As the true prophets speak the true word of God, so also they speak it by the true Spirit of God, and not by their own spirit: and thus did Christ, who saith of himself, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel;* and so he spake the word of God, by the Spirit of God.

And Christ commanded his disciples to stay at *Jerusalem* till they had received the Spirit, and then to go forth

and preach; because he knew they could not preach God's word aright, without God's Spirit; and also Christ saith of all the faithful, that *it is not they that speak, but the Spirit of their Father that speaks in them;* yea, and the whole gospel is called, the ministration of the Spirit.

Now the true prophets, speaking the word of God, by and in his Spirit, do also speak it in the right sense, and after the true mind of Christ; as *Paul* saith of himself, and of other believers, who had received the Spirit, *We have the mind of Christ.*

But the false prophets, though they speak the word of the letter exactly, and that according to the very original, and curiosity of criticisms, yet speaking it without the Spirit, they are false prophets before God, and his true church; seeing all right prophecy hath proceeded from the Spirit in all ages of the world, but especially it must so proceed in the days of the New-Testament, wherein God hath promised the largest effusion of his Spirit.

And they, speaking the word of the letter without the Spirit, do wholly mistake the mind of Christ in all; and under the outward letter of the word of God, do only bring in the mind of man. And this is one of the greatest delusions, and most mischievous snares that can be laid in the church, to bring in the word of Christ without the mind of Christ, yea, to bring in the word of Christ against the mind of Christ, and according to the mind of antichrist: this is the effectual operation of error, whereby all hypocrites and false christians are deceived, and that without all hope of recovery.

And thus you see, that the true prophets bring the true word, and bring it also by the true Spirit, and this manifests them to be of God: but the false, either bring not the true word, or if they bring the word in the letter, yet they bring it without the Spirit, and thus it is manifest, they are not of God.

Objection. But some will object here; If a man preach the word in the letter, even good, sound, and orthodox doctrine, no doubt but such a man is to be heard, and he may do much good in the church, though he want Christ's Spirit: This I heard from very many, who have thought they have said something.

But to this I answer: That they who want Christ's Spirit, which is the Spirit of prophecy, though they preach the exact letter of the word, yet are false prophets, and not to be heard by the sheep.

1. Because under the New-Testament we are not to regard the letter without the Spirit, but the Spirit as well as the letter; yea, the Spirit more than the letter: and therefore *Paul* saith, that Christ shall destroy antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming: he scarce takes any notice of the letter, but calls the true preaching of the gospel, the Spirit, or Christ's mouth, or the ministration of the Spirit. And therefore the spiritual people cannot join to that ministry, where the Spirit of Christ is wanting, though there be the outward letter of the word in it.

2. They that preach only the outward letter of the word, without the true Spirit, they make all things outward in the church, and so carry the people, with whom they prevail, only to outward things, to an outward word, to outward worship, outward ordinances, outward church, outward government, &c. whereas, in the true kingdom of Christ, all things are inward and spiritual; and all the true religion of Christ is written in the soul and Spirit of man, by the Spirit of God; and the believer is the only book, in which God himself writes his New-Testament.

3. They who preach the outward letter of the word, though never so truly, without the Spirit, do (as hath been said) wholly mistake the mind of Christ in the word, for want of the Spirit, which is the only true and infal-

lible interpreter of his mind; and so, under the outward letter of the word, preach their own mind, and not Christ's mind; and do make all the scriptures serve their own turns, even their own worldly ends and advantages, and nothing else.

4. They that preach the outward letter of the word, without the Spirit, can, with such a word, both live themselves, in all the inward evils of corrupted nature, and allow others to do so too. And thus the gospel, which, in the Spirit of it, is the judgment of sin, is made, in the letter of it, the covering for sin, and the encourager of it: seeing such men, who have the letter of the word in their mouth, do live in the inward corruptions of their hearts, more securely and quietly than other men.

5. Last of all, let us know, that whoever doth agree with Christ never so exactly in the letter, and yet differs from him in Spirit, is very antichrist. And therefore, when the devils, in him that was possessed, said to Christ, *We know thee who thou art, the holy one of God*, and so agreed very exactly with the gospel in the letter; yet Christ forbad them to speak, because they spake not by a right spirit. And Christ hath said, *Whoever is not with me* (that is, in the Spirit) *is against me*, though he have the same outward letter of the word with him.

And so, as Christ builds up his church, by his Spirit, through his word; so antichrist builds up his church by the word without the Spirit: and Christ's church and antichrist's do often differ very little or nothing in word or letter, yet do always infinitely differ in Spirit.

Wherefore to conclude, let us know, that that church that hath the word, if it wants the Spirit, is antichrist's church; and that that ministry that useth the word, and wants the Spirit, is antichrist's ministry; and that all works, duties, prayings, preaching, fasting, thanksgiving, &c. without Christ's Spirit, are nothing but the

very kingdom of antichrist, and the abomination of desolation.

And so I proceed to the second general rule of trial which I propounded, whereby we may discern the true prophets of Christ, from the false prophets of antichrist, and that is:

By the truth of the life of Christ, in reference to his office in the word.

And here I shall give you many trials, how you may certainly know and discern the false prophets of antichrist from the true, humble, and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, before whom we are all present this day, and before whose tribunal we shall all be judged, he knows, that I shall not purposely speak any thing at this time, either to please myself, or to displease you; but I shall desire to speak all out of very faithfulness to him, who *hath remembered me when I was in low condition, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

The first sign, then, whereby the true prophets may be discerned from the false, is this:

First, the true prophets are all sent of God. So was *Moses*, whom God sent to the children of Israel, and bid him tell them, that *I AM, even the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had sent him to them*; and he gave him a proportionable measure of his presence, to cause them to believe it. And Christ, a greater prophet than *Moses*, even the head of all the children of God, said by *Isaiah*, chap. xlviii. 16. "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning, and now the Lord and his Spirit hath sent me." And every where in the gospel, he still declares, how *he came not of himself, but his Father sent him.*

And as the Father sent Christ, so Christ sends all his seed, the true ministers of the gospel, as is manifest,

John xx. 21. where Christ saith to his disciples, *as my Father sent me, so send I you*; which he spake, not only touching them, but touching all that should believe in his name through their word; and *Paul* also saith, *Rom.* x. 15. *How shall they teach except they be sent?* So that true preaching comes from true sending, and this comes from the grace of God.

Now I desire you farther to take notice, that God hath reckoned the choice of his ministers, one of the weightiest things that belong unto his kingdom; wherefore he would never commit the trust of this to any sort of men whatsoever. Yea, Christ himself did not choose his disciples at his own human will, but only at the will of God, and therefore was much in prayer before he chose them.

And the apostles themselves, durst not of themselves, when they were all met together, choose any one into the room of *Judas*, but they betook themselves to prayer, and desired the Lord to shew them whom He had chosen. And *Acts* xiii. The *Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* And *Paul* tells the Galatians, that he was an apostle, *not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.*

By all which scriptures we may perceive what care the Lord hath always had, to send his own ministers himself into his own church, and would have his true church receive no ministers but such as he sends them.

And the great and chief sending into the church is from God himself, as we see in Moses, and all the prophets, and in Christ himself the head of them, and in all the apostles, and in all believers.

Now the proof a man's being sent of God, is this, to be anointed with the Spirit: as *John* xx. 22. When Christ said to his disciples, *As my Father sent me, so send I you:* He breathed upon them, and said, *Receive the holy Spirit*

For his Father sent him only by pouring out his Spirit on him; and he sends them so only; and he that saith, The unction of the Spirit alone is not sufficient for the ministry of the New Testament, he denies Christ and his apostles to have been sufficient ministers, and he perverts the scripture, and seduces the people.

Now the true teachers, through the pouring forth of the Spirit on them, they do truly know Christ himself, and the great mystery of the gospel, and all things that are freely given us of God; and they are also filled with love to their brethren, and are enabled to confess the truth, and to do thereafter, and to contemn the world, and patiently to suffer rebukes, &c. all which, is a sufficient proof of any one's being sent of God.

And thus the true prophets are all sent of God, which is their great comfort and support in all trouble and difficulties; because he that sends them, is still with them. *Lo*, saith Christ, *I am with you always, to the end of the world.*

But now, on the contrary, the false prophets and ministers of antichrist, are not sent of God, but are sent and appointed by men, and that through their own desire, and seeking. And of such the Lord complains, *Jer.* xxiii. 21. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied: but because I sent them not, neither commanded them, they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord," ver. 32.

And Christ saith, *Many false christs, and false prophets, shall arise:* that is, are not sent of God, but shall arise of themselves. And *Paul* saith to the elders of the church of *Ephesus*, Acts xx. "Out of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them. They arise of themselves, they are not sent of God.

Now such teachers as these do usually spring up in the church, through academical degrees, and ecclesiastical

ordination; which two things have poured forth into the church, whole swarms of false prophets, and antichristian ministers, never sent of God, nor anointed of his Spirit; to the irreparable damage, prejudice, and ruin, of the people and nations who have received them, with their false and poisonous doctrine.

Wherefore, all those teachers who are not sent of the Lord and his Spirit, but arise of themselves, and come into the church in the strength and might of their degrees and orders, they are all false prophets.

THE SECOND SIGN.

The true prophets, who are sent of God, take all their warrant and authority from God for what they teach, and do not at all regard men, or build on them. And this hath all along made the true teachers so bold, and so confident, in the name of God, against the world and worldly church: So *Isaiah* l. 4, &c. saith, *The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in due season to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned.*

The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know I shall not be ashamed.

He is near that justifies me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together; who is mine adversary? Let him come near me.

Behold, the Lord will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up. See here the admirable confidence of a teacher sent from God.

And so also our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh; how bold was he in his ministry, coming in the

name of the Lord, and having his authority and doctrine from him! How boldly did he reprove the Scribes and Pharisees, the chief teachers of the Jewish church! And what a clear and glorious confession of the truth of God, did he hold forth against all their opposition and contradiction!

And the apostles, when the rulers, elders, and scribes, and *Annas* the high priest, and *Caiaphas*, and *John*, and *Alexander*, and all the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together, and threatened them, and straitly charged them to preach no more in that name; they answered, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* Acts iv. 19.

And so *Wickliffe*, *John Hus*, and *Luther*, who were sent of God, did take all their authority from God alone, and so were bold and confident, each of them in their time, against the whole world.

But now the false prophets, who come of themselves, and by the sending of men, they do all by the authority and warrant of man; and accordingly, do join themselves together by secular power, to bring about their doctrines and designs in the church; and from the civil authority, they procure leave and power to publish their doctrine, and set up their discipline in the church, and to suppress whatever is contrary thereto; and without this worldly license and authority, they neither can nor dare do any thing: and are never bold, but when the authority of man is for them. But the true prophets (as hath been said) do only take their authority from Christ for what they teach, and are bold in his name only, to hold it forth: and so, after they have published the word in faith, in the same faith they leave the maintenance and defending of it to him alone, whose word it is; and they neither

publish it for man's commanding, nor smother it for man's forbidding.

Wherefore those teachers, who have not their warrant from Christ, for their doctrine, and are not bold in his name alone, but do derive all their authority and encouragement from men, to speak and act in the things of God, they are all false prophets, and ministers of antichrist.

THE THIRD SIGN.

The true and faithful teachers, as they are sent of God, and take their authority from God; so, in all their doctrine, they only hold forth Jesus Christ. And this they have learned from God himself.

For the Father, speaking immediately from heaven, preached nothing but Christ, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him:* and this he spake thrice, from the excellent glory; manifesting, that he himself had no higher thing, nor any other thing to declare to the world, than his Son, Jesus Christ, in whom alone are hid all the treasures of all true and spiritual wisdom and knowledge.

The Son also, in all his ministry, only declared who himself was, whom the Father had given to the elect church; saying, *Psal.* ii. *I will publish the decree, whereof the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:* And in all his ministry, only declared who he was, and to what end his Father had given him: saying, *I am the bread of life, which cometh down from heaven; he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst.* And, *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me:* And all his doctrine and works were to this end, that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and that believing in him, we might have eternal life.

The Apostles also of the Lord, after they had received the Spirit, did go up and down the world, only preach-

ing Jesus, and repentance, and remission of sins in his name.*

And *Paul*, a laborious preacher, through the grace of God did renounce and reject all his worldly learning, and all his human accomplishments and excellencies in the ministry of the gospel, and preached nothing but the right knowledge of Christ, and right faith in him, as he himself testifies, *Phil.* iii. 7, &c. saying, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to him in his death, if by any means I might attain to the resurrection from the dead."

And he also tells the *Corinthians*, that he desired to *know nothing amongst them, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

And thus the true teachers preach nothing but Christ; and him they preach, not according to their own human conceptions and apprehensions, but according to the revelation they have received from the Father, by the Spirit.

But on the contrary, the false teachers preach nothing less than Christ, and faith in him: but they chiefly teach the law, and moral doctrine, and works; or else philosophy, and philosophical subtilties and speculations, which yet the apostle hath expressly forbidden, *Col.* ii. 8. saying to the faithful, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after*

* Non dixit Christus suo primo cætui, ite et prædicate mundo nugas; sed verum illis dedit fundamentum; et illud tantum sonuit in ore ipsorum. *Dantes.*

the elements of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are compleat in him who is the head of all principality and power: And so we need not turn from Christ to philosophy, that vain deceit.

Wherefore, they who preach not the mystery of Christ, through the revelation of the Father and the Spirit, but moral virtues and vain philosophy, instead of Christ, are all of them false prophets, and ministers of antichrist.

THE FOURTH SIGN.

The true ministers and prophets of Christ, as they only hold forth Christ, so they hold him forth only for the love of God, and their brother, and not for any wordly profit or gain.

Thus Christ taught his disciples, out of the love of God; as he saith, *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart,* that is, his love to God. And also out of love to his brother; for having loved his own, he loved them to the end: and out of this love, taught them; as he saith, *I have called you friends; for whatsoever I have heard from my father, I have declared unto you.*

And as he taught out of love himself, so he hath commanded all his seed to teach one another out of the same love; and hath given them his Spirit, which is love, that thereby they might love both him and their brethren; and therefore Christ (knowing how difficult a work it was, to feed his sheep with the right and sound doctrine of the gospel; and that none could or would perform this, except they loved Christ from their very heart-root) said thrice to *Peter, Peter, dost thou love me? dost thou love me? dost thou love me? Then feed my sheep, my lambs, my sheep;* and *Paul* said, the love of Christ constrained him to teach the gospel: and the fruit of the Spirit, in all believers, being love, in this brotherly love they serve one another in the gospel.

And as Christ himself did not sell his spiritual travel to his church for wordly profit or gain; no more do his true seed and servants; for, saith *Paul*, *Acts* xx. 33. "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel; ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessity, and to them who were with me:" And 2 *Cor.* xii. 14. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you, I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you." And *ver.* 17. "Did I make a gain of you, by any of them whom I sent unto you? or did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not both in the same Spirit?"

And thus the true teachers do not seek any temporal gain or commodity from the hands of men, by their preaching, but do truly and cheerfully teach, out of the love of Christ, and their brother.

But on the contrary, the false teachers, though they do not teach the gospel (being destitute of the Spirit) but vain philosophy, and human doctrines, instead of it, yet will they live by the gospel, and not by the labour of their hands, in a lawful calling; they will have the temporal goods of the church, and yet not minister the spiritual treasure of it; and what they do minister, they do it for reward, as it is written, *Micah* iii. 11. *The priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.*

And to shew they preach for the love of gain, they are brought up to the ministry, as to a trade to live by; and they run in this way, from one place to another, from a less to a greater living; and where they may gain most of this world, there will they be sure to be: Yea, so much are they addicted to their worldly advantage, that they had rather Christ's kingdom should never be set up in the world, nor antichrist's be thrown down, than suffer any loss or diminution in their profit, power, dignity,

authority, or in any worldly thing, whereof they have got the possession and enjoyment.

Wherefore, they that teach Christ, not for the love of Christ, and their brother, but for temporal gain, and worldly advantage only, are all of them false teachers, and ministers of antichrist.

THE FIFTH SIGN.

The true teachers teach Christ to others, as they have been taught him of God, only for the glory of God, and not out of vain-glory. Wherefore Christ said of himself, *John* viii. 50. *I seek not mine own glory:* And *John* vii. 18. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him*: So that, whoever speaketh from God, seeketh God's glory: And so also *Paul* saith, 1 *Thess.* ii. 6. *Nor of men sought we glory; neither of you, nor yet of others.*

So that the true teachers do not preach the word, to win to themselves glory in the world, and praise and applause from men; but do rather seek the glory of God, by their doctrine, though hypocrites and carnal people, for this cause, do deride and scorn them.

But on the contrary, the false teachers seek, above all things, their own glory by their ministry, and to this end,

1. They get to themselves titles and degrees in the university, for their pretended knowledge in divinity above other christians; and by these degrees, they get "the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and are called of men, doctor, doctor;" which Christ hath expressly forbidden in his gospel.

2. Having got such titles, they go forth in their own name, as men of approved religion, learning, reputation and worth, and for such, they make account, that the world should receive them.

3. They especially desire to preach to rich men, and great men, and men in place and authority, that from them they may have protection, favour, preferment, and a quiet life; and care not much to preach to the poor, plain, mean people, by whom they can expect no worldly advantage.

4. To this end also, they speak in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, and so mingle philosophy with divinity, and think to credit the gospel with terms of art; and do sprinkle their sermons with Hebrew, Greek, Latin, as with a perfume acceptable to the nostrils of the world.

In a word, they preach all things in a pleasing spirit to the world, that they, by all, may get glory to themselves, and may be accounted, with *Simon Magus*, some great ones: And in all this, they shew they speak of themselves, and not of God; seeing they seek not God's glory, but their own; for, *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory.*

Wherefore they, who, by their ministry, do not seek the glory of God alone, and of his Son Jesus Christ, but seek their own glory, and the praise of men, as the clergy generally do, and not least of all in this place; they are all of them false prophets, and ministers of antichrist.

THE SIXTH SIGN.

The true preachers and ministers of Christ, when they are opposed, resisted, slandered and persecuted for the word's sake, they endure it with all meekness, humility and patience. Thus Christ endured all the reproaches, contradictions, revilings, and persecutions from the Jews; and *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. And *Paul* saith of himself to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. xii. 12. *You had the signs of my apostleship in all patience.*

But on the contrary, the false teachers, when any truth is preached that they know not, or that is against their gain or glory, they snarl and bark at it, and bite them that bring it. And therefore saith *Paul*, "beware of dogs," *Phil.* iii. 2. not dogs by nature, but by practice and condition. Now a dog, lying on a rich garment, or soft carpet, at his ease, as long as he may lie still, he is very quiet; but if you would remove him from his place, he soon snarls and flies at you, and shews of what mettle he is made. So the false teachers, who have gotten a carnal knowledge of the world, and have thereby gotten preferment, and great advantages in the world, they lie quiet on these soft things, as long as they may lie still; but if any seek, by the word of God, to rouse them up from these things, they rise up like angry dogs, and bark at them, and rend them, as much as they can or dare.

Wherefore, those teachers who cannot patiently suffer wrongs for the word's sake; but on the contrary, when they are reproved by the word, and their sheep's clothing pulled off, even their false vizard of religion, do presently grow impatient and furious; and they that bark and foam against the late revealed truth, which toucheth them very near, they are all false teachers, and ministers of antichrist.

THE SEVENTH SIGN.

The true prophets, and ministers of Christ, do not force any body to hear them, and obey their doctrine against their wills; neither do they vex and trouble them with secular power, who will not obey them, and be subject to them; but they leave all such people as they found them, lest they should seem, by their doctrine, to seek any worldly thing.

Thus Christ, when he taught the gospel, still cried out, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;" and he that had not ears to hear, he did not punish him: and again saith Christ, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;" and still left

men to their own freedom, whether they would be his disciples or no.

And as Christ did thus himself, so he left the same thing in command with all his true disciples: and when he sent them forth to preach, *Matt.* x. he charged them, saying, "Whoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet, as a testimony against them;" he doth not bid them, if they be refused, to betake themselves to the secular power, to get authority from thence to stay and abide there, whether they will or no, or otherwise to punish them; but bids them only to *shake off the dust of their feet*, that they might know, they came not to them for the love of earthly things. And when the apostles, out of a false zeal, would have had Christ to have commanded fire to come down from heaven to have destroyed them that would not receive him; he plainly reproved them, saying, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Wherefore those teachers, who, for worldly advantage sake, will force themselves upon those men against their wills, who will not willingly receive them; and will provoke the worldly powers and magistrates to punish those who will not hear and receive them and their doctrine, they are all false prophets, and ministers of antichrist.

THE EIGHTH SIGN.

The true teachers are content that others should teach as well as they, and would not make a monopoly of the ministry to themselves alone, for worldly advantage sake.

Thus our Lord Jesus Christ did not content himself to preach the gospel alone, but he sent forth others, as his Father sent forth him; yea, he pours forth his Spirit on all flesh, that sons, and daughters, and servants, and handmaids, may prophesy, and so *knowledge may cover the earth, as waters the seas:* and to make the world willing

to receive such teachers, he saith, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

And when *Eldad* and *Medad*, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord did rest, prophecied in the camp of Israel, without asking any license from *Moses*, and one told *Moses* of it in great displeasure, and *Joshua*, thereupon, wished *Moses* to forbid them to prophecy, then *Moses*, the meek servant of the Lord, replied, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God, saith he, that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them all;" Numb. xi. 29. And so the godly mind of any faithful teacher, desireth to be helped in the work of the word, that the precious truth of the gospel, which he himself alone cannot sufficiently express, all men's tongues might declare. And so they do not envy in others, those spiritual gifts which God hath given them, but do wish, that every man had a mouth and wisdom given him, to declare the mystery of the gospel, and the infinite love, mercy, wisdom, truth, power, redemption, and salvation of God by Jesus Christ, which cannot, by all men's tongues, be sufficiently published in the world.

Farther, as no worldly prince or magistrate hath such unlimited power over the goods of the people, as to forbid them to give corporal alms to them that stand in need, as occasion is ministered; no more hath any power, whether ecclesiastical or civil, such dominion over the word and truth of God, written by the Spirit in the hearts of believers; but that they may at all times, and upon all occasions, minister spiritual alms to them who stand in need, by the teaching of the gospel.

Wherefore, those teachers, who are envious that any should preach the word but themselves, and their own tribe, as they call it, (because they get great worldly advantage thereby, whereas otherwise they would be contented that any should preach) and so would have the civil ma-

gistrate only to license them to be preachers, because of their degrees and orders, and to forbid all others, they all are false teachers and ministers of antichrist.

THE NINTH SIGN.

The true teachers do not only teach the word, but are also ready to seal to the truth of it with their estates, liberties, and lives.

Thus did Jesus Christ, as was foretold by *Isaiah*, chap. l. 5. where Christ saith by his Spirit, "The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back; I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them who plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." And in the days of his flesh, how willingly did he seal to the truth of his New Testament doctrine with his suffering, and suffered himself to be apprehended by the hands of men, and to be crucified, when he could have commanded legions of angels for his succour, if he had pleased, and would have made use of his own infinite and almighty power.

And this submission and willingness to suffer for the truth, Christ hath commanded all his disciples, saying, "He that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that will lose his life for my sake, shall save it: And if any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up the cross, and follow me: And again, I send you forth as sheep among wolves, and ye shall be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake," that is, for the true and spiritual teaching of the gospel.

Now as nothing will procure us more enmity, than the spiritual holding forth of the gospel, which will cause the worldly church to cast out our name as evil, and to cast our persons out of their synagogues, yea, and also to kill us, when they can get power; so if we be true teachers, must we be ready and willing to suffer all this for Christ's name sake.

Wherefore, those teachers who embrace the height and honour of this life, and will not own the gospel of Christ, farther than they may thereby procure to themselves credit, reputation, profit, and preferment in the world; and to this end, in doubtful and difficult times, carry themselves so subtilly, that whatever party shall prevail, they may still stand on their legs, and enjoy their present prosperity and preferment; and so are neither hot nor cold, neither truly for the truth, nor openly against the truth, but seek by all subtil means to decline the cross of Christ. And though in Christ himself, they praise his meanness, plainness, simplicity, suffering, and cross, yet they themselves are delicate, and cannot endure these things for Christ's sake in themselves, but bend and frame the whole course of their ministry so, as they may obtain all good things from the world, and avoid and escape all evil things from it; these all are false prophets, and ministers of antichrist.

By these nine signs (for I shall name no more now) may the true prophets and ministers of Christ be manifestly distinguished and discerned from the false ones of antichrist, by all the true people of God, who have received his Spirit.

Now let God and his word be true, and every man a liar.

And now I shall make but two uses of this discourse briefly, and so conclude for this time. And the first shall be to those of you who are spiritual christians: and the second to the carnal clergy.

First, You who are true believers, and spiritual christians, may judge aright, by what you have heard, of the present clergy, or common ministry of the nation; and may see by the clear light of the word, that they, for the generality of them, are not true, but false prophets; not the ministers of Christ, but of antichrist; not sent of God,

nor anointed by his Spirit, but ordained and appointed by men, at their own desire and seeking, for worldly advantage sake; men who stand and minister in the church, only in the strength of their academical degrees and ecclesiastical ordination, but do not stand and feed the people, in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the name of their God. And this corrupt ministry or carnal clergy have deceived the people and nations, with a corrupt and carnal understanding of Christ, and of the scriptures, and of the kingdom of Christ, and of the government of his kingdom, and of all the things of Christ: Yea, they have, under the name and pretence of Christ, set up a church to antichrist every where, and do continually mislead thousands of poor souls.

And this, I say, is the greatest evil in these false teachers, that under the name of Christ, they fight against Christ, and under the name of the word, they fight against the word, and under the name of the church, they fight against the church: And this is a grievous abomination of desolation in the temple of God, that they who should be the chief for the truth, are the chief against it; and that they who should be faithful witnesses to the holy truth of Christ, should prove lying witnesses against it. If a prophane person, or heathen, should do this, it would be wickedness and impiety, even in them; but this is horrible abomination, and antichristianism in the Church of Christ, that they, who are come into it as friends, and have obtained the chief places in it, should yet, under this vizard, be indeed very enemies, and seducers, and hinderers of the word of Christ crucified. Wherefore saith the truth against such, *Psal.* lv. 12. *It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that magnified himself against me, for then would I have hid myself from him; but it was thou a man, mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance; we took sweet*

counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company, &c.

And so these false teachers are these familiar enemies, who exercise all their hatred under the pretence of love, all their enmity under pretence of friendship, and practise all their wickedness under a form of godliness; and by this subtilty have they deceived the world. They will not plainly contradict the words of the prophets, apostles, and Christ, in the letter of it; but will praise it, and speak well of it; but yet they are utter enemies to the true and spiritual meaning of it, both in their lives and doctrine: and the more these men make a shew of religion and holiness, the greater antichrists they are in the church.

Wherefore to you who are true christians, and have received an anointing from God, this is the word and charge of God, *Come out from among them, my people, and touch not the unclean thing*, that is, their carnal doctrine; have nothing to do with such prophets and ministers, but remember what Christ saith, *John* x. That *his sheep hear his voice, and will not hear the voice of strangers; for they know not the voice of strangers.* And if any of you live in any town or parish, where such false prophets are, though they go under the name of godly and orthodox, yet touch not the unclean thing, but know, that it is better for you believers to assemble together among yourselves, though you be but few, than to communicate with the false prophets, in their false ordinances: seeing Christ hath promised his presence to his believers, even where but two or three meet together in his name; yea, hath said, *If any two of you shall agree together, to ask any thing on earth, it shall be done of my Father which is in heaven.* And if you, having these promises, shall meet together among yourselves, in the name and Spirit of Christ, in the use of the word, and prayer of faith, lo, Christ himself will be with you; and though you be but

few, yet are you the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, and of that very church, *against which the gates of hell shall not prevail:* And thus much to you spiritual christians.

2. And now for the carnal clergy, or false prophets, their burden is this, from the Lord. You have run when you were not sent; you have said, Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken by you; you have grieved the hearts of the faithful, and strengthened the hands of the wicked: You have been forward to advance the form of godliness, whilst you have been bitter enemies to the power of it: You have deceived the nations, and made them drunk with the cup of the wine of your fornications: you have done more against Christ and his true church, and more for antichrist and his false church, than all the people in these nations besides. Wherefore this is the word of the Lord to you, throughout all your quarters, that the nations shall not much longer be deceived by you, nor buy any more of your merchandise, for your wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps; your doctrine being the word of philosophy, and not of faith; after the mind of man, but contrary to Christ's mind: to set up yourselves and your own interest, to the prejudice of Christ's word and people. Wherefore, how much you have glorified yourselves, and lived deliciously by this trade of making merchandise of the word of God, so much torment and sorrow shall God give you, and your plagues shall come upon you in a day, and your judgment in an hour; and your lovers shall not be able to help you, nor the petitioners for you, to uphold you; but God shall bring you down wonderfully, by the clear light of his word, and his mighty irresistable providence accompanying it; and the world shall tremble, and wonder at the noise of your downfal; and the heavens, and holy apostles, and prophets, shall rejoice over you, when God shall avenge their cause upon you. And the Lord will save

his flock; and they shall be no more a prey to you, neither shall you any more serve yourselves of them. And he will set up one shepherd over them, even Jesus Christ; and he shall feed them, and be their shepherd. And till these things be fully brought to pass, you shall be clothed with trembling, when you shall perceive the Lord is risen up, to perform all these things according to his word.

And now for conclusion, if any of you, or most of you, or all of you, are offended at these things, in such sort, that you cannot contain yourselves from anger and bitter zeal, I do intreat you, to consider seriously, how much better, and more profitable to your eternal salvation it would be, for you to resist, and to refrain from such evil and unchristian passions; and that you would rather (if there be any hope) return to your own hearts, and try your works, and repent before our holy and righteous Lord, and return truly and speedily to Christ from antichrist, lest you be inwrapped both in his temporal and eternal destruction.

And thus much was delivered to the *University Congregation* in CAMBRIDGE, for a testimony against them, except they repent. The rest, for the substance of it, was delivered elsewhere in the *Town*, as followeth. *Anno*, 1653.

The Trial of Spirits.

1 John IV. 1, &c.

Believe not every Spirit, &c.

IN this scripture we have noted these six things.

1. That the apostle gives the faithful notice of a great evil risen up, *Many false prophets are gone into the world.*

2. He prescribes them a sufficient remedy against that evil; *Believe not every spirit, but try,* &c.

3. He gives them a right rule for trial, *ver.* 2, 3.

4. He shews, with whom those false prophets, who come in the spirit of antichrist, should not prevail, to wit, with none of the true children of God, *ver.* 4.

5. With whom they should prevail, to wit, with the worldly and carnal people, *ver.* 5.

6. He shews, how the Spirit of truth and error may be known in the people, as well as in the teachers, *ver.* 6.

Of the three first of these points I have spoken already, in the university congregation. The last time I spake of the third thing, that is, the rule of trial, how the false prophets may be known and discerned from the true: And I gave forth clearly and plainly out of the word of God, nine signs to distinguish them, not one of which can possibly be contradicted, but by the spirit of antichrist, or by the prophane and ignorant world: And then I also delivered two uses, the one to spiritual christians, and the other to the carnal clergy, all which you may have recourse to, in the former discourse.

But how these things have since vexed and tormented the false prophets, you very well know; and how exceedingly grieved and angry they are, that this word of God

should be taught the people, and that in their presence. Unto which word of Christ, they say by their deeds, as Satan, in the possessed, said once to Christ himself in words, *Mark* i. 24. *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God.* This unclean spirit knew, and acknowledged Christ to be the holy one of God, and yet would have nothing to do with him, because he was come to destroy him. So these false prophets cannot choose but acknowledge (in their hearts at least) that the word that hath been taught them, is the holy word of God, but yet (they say) what have we to do with it? for it is come to destroy us. For the more the word of Christ is held forth in the clearness and plainness of the gospel, the more doth it destroy them, and their affairs: Their carnal clergy, flowing from the antichristian fountain of the universities; their ecclesiastical assemblies, arising out of the clergy; their presbyterian government, springing up out of their ecclesiastical assemblies; their national church, the product of their presbyterian government: together, with their worldly power and dominion, their high titles, their scarlet robes, their divinity degrees, &c. I say, the word of the gospel comes with full might and mind to destroy all these, and all their other things, in which their souls delight, as bringing worldly profit, power, and honour to them. Wherefore this word, which abases, and casts them down, and all their things, and exalts Christ alone, and all his things, they cannot endure; but do account it their reproach and shame, and say to it, what have we to do with thee, thou holy word of God! for thou art come to destroy us; and so, against this word, they are angry, and enraged at no ordinary or human rate; but as *David* saith, *Psal.* lix. *They belch out with their mouth, and make a noise like a dog, and go up and down, full of pride, cursing and lying. But the*

Lord laughs at these heathen, and hath them in derision, for he seeth the day is coming, when they shall wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

Now this behaviour of theirs towards the word of God, is plainly foretold, *Rev.* xvi. 10, 11. where it is said, that *when the God of heaven poured forth his vial by the fifth angel, on the seat or throne of the beast, his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores; and yet repented not of their deeds.* Now the throne of the beast in these nations, are the universities, as the fountain of the ministry; the vial poured on them, is the true word of God, or the plain and simple gospel, which is the word of faith; than which, nothing is more grievous to them who have been bred up in philosophy, and in the knowledge, wisdom, learning, righteousness and spirit of the world; now the primary event of the pouring forth of this vial of the word of God on this seat, is the darkening of antichrist's kingdom, as it is said, *his kingdom was full of darkness;* it was full of darkness before, but now it is discovered to be full of darkness; their philosophy is darkness, and vain deceit; their school divinity darkness, and antichristianism; their divinity acts and clerums, darkness; their professorships of divinity, darkness, yea, all their doctrine, faith, worship, works, church-discipline, titles, ordination, and all are discovered to be darkness, even gross darkness by the word of faith: And then follows the secondary event of the pouring forth this vial, which is, *They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains, and sores, which the word inflicted on them;* that is, they had not the ordinary anger of men against the word, but the anger and wrath of devils, causing them to blaspheme again. But yet, for all

these things, they repented not of their deeds (as we see manifestly) which yet would have been more profitable for them.

And this also discovers them to be false prophets indeed, and the right ministers of antichrist: and this appertains to the sixth sign of false prophets, which I gave before.

The fourth general point.

And now I proceed to the fourth thing, wherein the apostle shews, with whom the false prophets, which come in the spirit of antichrist, should not prevail; namely, with none of the true children of God: and this is set down, in *ver.* 4.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Here now the apostle shews the victory, which the truly faithful and spiritual christians do obtain over antichrist and his false prophets, together with the grounds of that victory.

1. The victory is set down in these words, *Little children, ye have overcome them.*

2. The grounds of this victory are two.

1. Because the faithful are of God, as children of their Father: *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.*

2. Because that spirit which the faithful have received, and which dwells in them, is stronger, and mightier than that spirit which the world receives, and which dwells in them. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

I shall first speak something of the victory itself; that is, of that glorious victory, which all the true children of God do obtain over antichrist. For though antichrist and his teachers do come in Christ's name (as Christ hath foretold) and in sheeps clothing; and though they transform themselves into the apostles of Christ, and

come with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness, holding forth a false Christ the head; a false church the body; a false word, a false worship, false works, false ordinances, and all these false things exceedingly like the true, and in the very form and appearance of the true; in such sort, that they prevail with all the national church, and the generality of the people of the world, which all wonder after them; yet they are not able, by all these things, to prevail with any of the true children of God, as Christ hath taught us, saying, *Many false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall come with lying signs and wonders; able, if it were possible, to deceive the elect:* And though they do deceive all others, yet it is not possible for them to deceive the elect of God, that is, thoroughly and fully, as they do deceive others; but the faithful and elect people of God do escape their deceits, and do overcome them; yea, though they be but little children, new in the faith, and young in Christ, yet do they overcome all the false prophets in the world. For these little children are so stript of their old nature, that they overcome *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life,* which are not of God, but of the world, and through which only, the ministers of antichrist are mighty; and so these teachers can find nothing in them, on which they can lay hold to prevail. Besides, as new born babes can discern and taste which is good and wholesome milk, and suitable to them, and can refuse what is otherwise; and this instinct they have in their very nature, as soon as they have a being, to judge of their food, which is good for them, and which is hurtful. So the children of God, as soon as ever they, by faith, are made partakers of the divine nature, they can immediately judge of the milk of the word, and can surely taste and discern whether it be sincere or adulterated, whether it be good or hurtful for them. And so, in the virtue of their new nature, they reject and overcome all the false doctrines of the false teachers.

And thus we have seen all along, in the several ages of the reign of antichrist, that Christ hath always had a people of his own, though but few in number, and mean in condition, and despised of the world, whom antichrist never could prevail against, neither by the subtilty of his doctrine, nor by the violence of his tyranny; but they have, by their faith and patience, and word of their testimony, withstood him, and his multitudes.

Now the grounds of this victory here named, are two.

1. The first is, Because they are of God: *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them.*

Antichrist and his false prophets cannot prevail against the truly faithful, because they are of God, as the Spirit also speaks elsewhere, saying, 1 *Cor.* i. 30. *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus:* and they are of God, as children are of the Father, as it is written, *James* i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.*

So that, as the children of men, are of their fathers, through a natural generation, and being; so the faithful are of God, through a spiritual generation, and being.

And as the children of men partake of the very nature of their fathers, so do the children of God partake of the divine nature; the faithful being born again, *not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever.*

That as Jesus Christ (who, according to his human nature, was a man, and in all things like to us, sin excepted) came to be of God, and to be the Son of God, through the coming and dwelling of the living word of God in his flesh, according to the love, will and counsel of the Father; so the same living word, coming and dwelling in the faithful, his members, according to the same love, will, and counsel of God, they also come to be of God

in Christ, as Christ is of God, according to his human nature.

And as Christ, being thus of God, according to the word of God, that dwelt in his human nature, overcame the devil, the head of antichrist, and antichrist and his body, the temple of the devil; so do all Christ's members overcome antichrist, and his prophets, through the same living word of God dwelling in them, or through the word of righteousness and life, its being incarnate in them, that is, its being written in their hearts by the Spirit, or put into their inward parts. Wherefore Christ throughout, that is, from the head itself to the lowest member, is called *Immanuel*, God with us: or which is all one, God manifested in the flesh.

And for this cause these faithful, or little children of God, cannot be prevailed against, inasmuch as they are of God, and so have in them, by true union and communion, the nature of God, and the word of God, and the Spirit of God, and the righteousness of God, and the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and the life and light of God, and all the things of God: as the apostle *Paul* saith, *In the new creature all things are become new, and all things* (that is, all these new things) *are of God*, (that is, they are the very things of God.) And so these faithful people cannot be prevailed against by antichrist, or by the devil, the head of antichrist; but they do prevail against the doctrine of antichrist, by the doctrine of Christ; against the spirit of antichrist, by the Spirit of Christ; against the sin of antichrist, by the righteousness of Christ; against the error of antichrist, by the truth of Christ; and against all the things of antichrist, by the infinite and eternal things of Christ.

Wherefore you see, that all they that are of God, through a new birth, and are the true children of that heavenly Father, and do partake of his divine nature, and

all his divine things, they cannot be overcome of antichrist and his prophets; but they do mightily overcome them all, through that immortal seed of the true and living word of God, of which they are born, and in which they live and act.

But, they that are overcome by antichrist and his teachers, through their deceivableness of unrighteousness, they never were the true children of God, but hypocrites, and unbelievers, under a form of godliness; that is, as the apostle stiles them, bastards, or false children, who never had received the true nature of God, through faith.

The second ground.

And now follows the second ground, why the faithful cannot be overcome by antichrist, and his prophets; to wit,

Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

And here the Apostle shews, that the true and faithful christians, are not only of God, but also have God himself dwelling and abiding in them: For they *are built up by the Spirit, to be the habitation of God; and God is in them, of a truth;* and that, not by created habits of grace, as antichrist and his prophets have thought and taught; but the true God is in them, of a truth, and he dwells in them, and walks in them, as himself hath said, and *the tabernacle of God is with men.* And now, as the sun is never without its light and heat, and all its virtues; and wherever it goes, all these go along with it, being inseparable from it; so, wherever the Lord God comes, he comes with all his righteousness, wisdom, power, peace, joy, and all his infinite and eternal things; and where God himself is, there are all the things of God.

And thus God, in his faithful people, is greater than he is that is in the world; that is, he is greater than antichrist, and the devil, his head. He is greater in his true

word, than they in their pretended word; greater in his true Spirit, than they in their pretended spirit; greater in his true righteousness, than they in their pretended righteousness; greater in his true wisdom and power, than they in their pretended wisdom and power, &c. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* Now for certain, the less is overcome by the greater; and seeing, God and his Spirit, in his saints, is greater in goodness, righteousness, wisdom, and all things, than the devil is in antichrist and his prophets; therefore the faithful, in whom God dwells, and manifests himself, must needs overcome antichrist and his false prophets, in whom the devil dwells, and manifests himself.

Now hence we may learn several things.

And first, we may learn, that antichrist can prevail against any outward form of religion and godliness, against any human virtues and graces, and works, and prayers, or any thing that is of man, or flows from him, though in never so great appearance of holiness; as we, by sad experience, have seen. Many men, of great seeming religion, famous for preaching, and praying, and reputed pillars in the church, when they have come hither into the university (where antichrist and his spirit have remained in their full strength, notwithstanding the great consumption which God hath brought on them by his word, in other parts) how soon have they ceased from that sense of the gospel, which they once seemed to have had; and how suddenly have they been entangled and overcome with the spirit of the university, and of antichrist, for worldly honour and advantage sake? and so, the highest and strongest formal religion in the church, antichrist can soon prevail against.

But antichrist can never prevail against God in the saints, nor against the righteousness, wisdom, and power of God in them, all which are contained in his true presence; nor against the faith, hope, and love of saints,

which are the works of God in them by his Spirit; against these antichrist cannot prevail; *For greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.*

So then, if thou hast any thing in thee that is truly of God, or rather, that is God himself in thee, antichrist cannot overcome it by all his arts and power; but he will easily overcome any thing else. Antichrist cannot prevail against *Immanuel*, which is God with us, nor against the mystery of godliness in us, which is, God manifest in the flesh; but every other thing, though it seem never so angelical, he prevails against.

2. We may learn hence, that it is not an easy thing to overcome antichrist, and to get the victory over that beast, and his image, and his mark, and the number of his name; seeing antichrist's coming is after the working of Satan (as the apostle saith) and through antichrist, the devil himself speaks, works, and acts; yet as an angel of light, in all lying or false power, wisdom and righteousness: and this he doth for the damnation of men, and to bring them all, who have no true love to the truth, to perish with himself for ever. And his operation of error, is so mighty and efficacious, that it cannot be resisted and overcome by any in all the world, but by those who are born of God, and do partake of his nature and presence in them. For the power, wisdom, and righteousness of antichrist and his prophets, which is so suitable to the nature of the world, and so glorious in its eye, cannot possibly be overcome, but by the true power, wisdom, and righteousness of God, in his true children or prophets.

3. Hence also let us learn, not to be dismayed at antichrist, and his prophets, who have, in all ages, got such reputation, power, and glory to themselves in the world, because of their seeming learning, righteousness, and religion; seeing Christ in us, and in all his poor people, is infinitely more mighty than they are, and the devil in

them; and nothing can prevail against us, except first it can prevail against Christ. Wherefore, if we, in ourselves, are never so weak, and through our weakness never so fearful and trembling, yet let us not be discouraged, or faint, seeing our might is not in ourselves, but in Christ, who dewlls in us, and who is infinitely greater than he that dwells in the world. He that dwells in us, through faith, is greater than he that dwells in them through unbelief; and in his strength, let us abide by his word and doctrine, even to suffering and death, if need be: and in all these evils we shall overcome them, by whom we seem to be overcome, as also Christ our head did.

And thus much for the fourth general thing.

The fifth point.

The apostle shews with whom antichrist and his teachers should prevail, to wit, with the worldly and carnal people, *verse* 5.

They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them.

The world hears them.

Antichrist and his prophets prevail with the world, and worldly people, and do obtain their favour, love, and applause: and they are their auditors, and delight in them and their doctrine.

Now by the world here, is meant such people, who though they have an outward christianity and religion, yet inwardly remain in their natural condition and corruption, without any true renewing through faith and the Spirit. And all such people, notwithstanding their seeming religion and righteousness, do love themselves and this world, and the things of it, better than Jesus Christ, and his truth. And these are called the world: and this world, or these worldly christians, do hear and entertain the teachers of antichrist and their doctrine.

Two grounds of which, the apostle here gives us (to wit, why these people cleave to these teachers.)

1. The first is, because these teachers are of the world.
2. Because they speak of the world.

1. They are of the world.

That, is, though, by their breeding and profession, their degrees and ordination, they seem to be set at a great distance from the common people, and to be nearer the kingdom of God, and the knowledge and possession of it, than the common people of the world; yet for all this, they, in deed, and in truth, are still of the world; and all their liberal education, their manner of life, their study, knowledge, learning, languages, sciences, degrees, and ordinations, doth not at all change their inward evil nature, mind, will, affections, nor the corrupt disposition and principles in which they were born; but notwithstanding all these things, they are still the very same throughout, as when they came first into the world, being destitute of a new birth, and heavenly nature: Nay, by all these things they are more taken into the spirit of the world, into the corruptions and evils of it, into the pride, lust, covetousness, and ambition of it, by how much, through such endowments and accomplishments, they think themselves better than other men; and so, notwithstanding their academical degrees, and ecclesiastical orders, they are not less, but more of the world, even fully of the world.

And hence we may learn, that it is not study, parts, breeding, learning, nor any natural endowments, or acquired accomplishments, that will deliver any man out of this world (or corrupt state of mankind) or that can change his nature, or give him the least place or interest in the kingdom of God; but only a new birth, and true faith in Jesus Christ, whereby we are made the children of God: without which, men are still of the world, notwithstanding all their other improvements.

And this very thing manifests, that universities cannot

be the fountains of the true ministry of the gospel, seeing all the education in it, philosophical, moral, and theological, cannot change mens natures, or deliver them from their corruptions, or translate them one hair's breadth out of this present evil world; yea, generally we see, that by university-education (as things have hitherto been managed) youth is made more of the world, than they were by nature, through the high improvement of their corruptions, by their daily converse with the heathens, their vain philosophers, and filthy and obscene poets; and by these heathenish, abominable accomplishments, are they made the more fit teachers for the world and worldly people, and become the more suitable to them, and obtain the greater aptness and ability to please them. Wherefore it may be most truly said of that ministry that flows merely from the fountain of the universities, that it is of the world.

And now, when the teachers are of one nature and principle, of one heart, mind, and consent with the hearers, there must needs be a great agreement between them; for each one approves and loves that which is like himself; and so the worldly people must needs cleave to the teachers that are of the world.

Yea farther, and which is very considerable, the world can endure and like any doctrine, though in the letter never so holy and spiritual, from such teachers as are of one nature and spirit with itself. And he that speaks of the things of Christ, without the Spirit of Christ, and by the spirit of the world, can never, by any such doctrine, be grievous to the world, but rather acceptable: Seeing there is more in the nature of those teachers to reconcile the world to them, than in their doctrine to set the world against them: For the world cannot but agree with those teachers that are of the world, let their doctrine, in the letter, be what it will.

Whereas, on the contrary, the faithful are not of the world, but of another seed, nature, and principle, which is in direct enmity to the world; and so they, speaking the things of Christ, in the Spirit of Christ, must needs be grievous and troublesome to them who have the Spirit of the world; and the friends of Christ crucified, cannot but be grievous to the friends of this world.

And this for the first ground.

2. The second ground, why the worldly people hear the worldly teachers, is this.

Because they speak of the world.

For as they are, so they speak; *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh;* and so they that are of the world, speak of the world: and this we may conceive of in three particulars.

1. The worldly teachers speak of the world; that is, they speak the spiritual word of God, in a carnal and worldly sense; they speak of divine things, as of human things, according to their natural and human mind, reason, knowledge, learning, and understanding of them. And so, they give forth Christ himself, and his kingdom, and all his things, his redemption, reconciliation, salvation; as also faith, hope, love, and all the graces of the Spirit, and riches of Christ; they give forth all these things, in a carnal understanding and notion to the people. And the world can esteem Christ, his kingdom, and things, in a worldly sense; they can bear, or endure faith and repentance, and the new creature, and the new Jerusalem, in a carnal sense; while in the true spiritual sense of them, and as they are in themselves, and according to the mind of Christ, they are the greatest enemies to them that can be.

Now believers must know in this matter, that whoever speaks the things of God's Spirit, by the spirit of a man, or spiritual things, in a human, carnal, and worldly sense,

is a false prophet, and teacher of antichrist. Whoever reading or hearing the gospel of God our Saviour, doth understand and frame it after his own human sense, and doth not so understand it as the Lord hath spoken it, he is a false prophet, understanding and speaking the gospel after his own mind, but contrary to Christ; and these open their own hearts to the people, and not God's.

Now when the people that are of the world, hear the teachers that are of the world, speaking spiritual things in a carnal and worldly sense, and according to such an apprehension as they have already in their own hearts, they do exceedingly cleave to, and embrace such teachers, and their doctrine.

For with such doctrine, man, in his natural condition, is well satisfied, seeing it leads men only to a change of outward works, and to a performance of outward worship, which any man, by his own natural abilities, can perform: and the world can well endure to put on the fairest form of godliness, and the strictest, so their nature inwardly may remain the same.

And thus the worldly people comply readily with the worldly doctrine of the worldly teachers, seeing it is after the sense and mind of man.

But on the contrary, Christ and his seed, as they are not of the world, so neither do they speak of the world, but being of God, they speak the things of God, according to God; they speak of the things of God by the Spirit of God, and so according to the mind of God: they speak of the things of God, in the wisdom, righteousness, truth, light and life of God; and thus the world cannot endure the word, nor those that teach it.

2. The prophets of antichrist speak of the world, that is, they turn the word of God into worldly and carnal doctrine, for worldly advantage sake; they preach the spiritual word of God carnally, that they may make it

serve their own turns and ends. That word of the gospel, which God hath given only to serve the spiritual and eternal welfare of his church, the worldly teachers frame and use *this*, only thereby to serve their own worldly credit and reputation, their worldly profit and preferment, and their worldly authority and dominion.

And thus that word of faith, which, in its own proper nature and working, calls off all men from this world, and the things of it, to the kingdom and glory of God; they make this very word to sound carnally, that by it they may seek themselves, and the things of this present life.

But Christ and his seed, who are of God, *they* speak of God, and not of the world, seeking no worldly thing at all by the word of God, which they teach and hold forth, as is manifest in the life of Christ, and his christians.

3. The ministers of antichrist, or worldly teachers, speak of the world; that is, they turn the word of God into worldly doctrine, that thereby they may avoid the cross, which the word of God, in the spiritual sense of it, would certainly expose them to. But now these worldly teachers, as they love the world, so they cannot endure the cross, that is, reproach, poverty, shame, sufferings and death, for the true word. Wherefore they preach the gospel in such a sense as shall please the world, but never offend them; as shall make the world their friends, but never their enemies; for they cannot endure to think of, much less to suffer, the utmost hatred and persecution of the world, for Christ's name's sake. Wherefore I say again, though in Christ, they will praise his reproach, his shame, his poverty, his tribulation, his death and crucifying, yet they cannot endure these things in themselves, for his truth's sake; but are most careful and studious to preach the word of God in such a worldly sense, as shall never provoke the world

against them, to do them the least harm; but shall rather incline them to confer upon them, according to their own phrase, all countenance and maintenance. And thus the worldly teachers speak of the world, in this sense also.

But Christ and his seed, who are of God, *they* speak not of the world, but of God; that is, they speak the word of God, according to God, never regarding whether the world be pleased or displeased therewith. Yea, they speak God's word according to God's mind, though they certainly know that it will procure them all sorts of reproaches, and tribulations, and all manner of evil to be spoken and done against them; inasmuch as they love God and his word, more than themselves and this world: and so, they are so far from declining the cross of Christ, which the right confession of the word will bring upon them, that they account it their greatest glorifying, to have *fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and to be made conformable to him in his death:* all which things he endured, because he spake God's word according to Gods mind, and contrary to the mind of the world, and worldly church.

And thus we see by *John's* doctrine, who spake by the Spirit, who they are, with whom antichrist and his false prophets prevail, to wit, the world, and worldly people; as also the grounds why they prevail with them, namely, because they are of the world, and speak of the world.

And now for the use.

The world hears these teachers, who are, and speak of the world.

And hence, first we learn, that antichrist and his prophets, the worldly teachers, come with such deceiveableness of unrighteousness, that no natural or worldly men whatever, of whatever parts, learning, knowledge, righteousness, can possibly discern them. If men are but

natural men, though never so accomplished, antichrist deceives them all, and makes them his disciples.

For antichrist comes so subtilly, and in such glorious appearances of holiness and religion, that none can know him and his ways, except they be singularly taught of God; according to that of Christ to his disciples, *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; to them it is not given.* And to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Christ, to them also it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of antichrist: and none can truly know, either the one, or the other, without a special gift from God.

Whence it is most evident, that men are not able to understand antichrist, and his kingdom, and things, as they are men learned in philosophy, and in the knowledge of the tongues, or as they are men of such and such degrees and titles in the university, or of such and such ecclesiastical orders in the church: I say, men, by all such abilities and accomplishments, as they speak, are not able to discern antichrist, but rather are the more ready to be overcome by him, seeing, by all these human and ecclesiastical things, antichrist can lay the faster hold on them, and make them the more his own.

And antichrist must needs be unknown to such men, inasmuch as Christ himself, as he is held forth in the word, and whatever he is and doth, both in himself and members, is wholly unknown to them; yea, is so strangely unknown, that, by a prodigious mistake, they do judge Christ, and his members, and their doctrine, to be antichrist, and his members, and their doctrine: And on the contrary, antichrist and his members, and their doctrine, they do account and esteem *of*, as of Christ himself, and his members and their doctrine. And thus is the multitude of carnal christians, which are even the whole world almost, through the effectual operation of Satan, brought to think and believe assuredly, that the

prophets of antichrist, who handle the scriptures carnally, and after the mind of man, do verily teach the very doctrine and truth of God; and of this they are so confident, that they would have the worldly powers and magistrates to force all men to believe as they say, and to practise as they command. Yea, these worldly men, with all their worldly accomplishments, are so deluded by antichrist, that whilst they oppose and persecute the faithful people of God, or rather Christ himself, and his word, works, truth, and righteousness in them, they verily think they oppose and persecute antichrist himself, and the falseness of his members. And as the Scribes and Pharisees, the chief teachers of the Jewish church, being deceivers themselves, did yet call Christ a deceiver, and in killing and crucifying him, thought they did God good service; so the carnal clergy, and the head of them, being antichrists themselves, do yet tell of, and terrify people with another antichrist: And being seducers themselves, do yet rise up against the very members of Christ, as seducers, that thereby they may boast themselves to be righteous. So thoroughly and perfectly hath antichrist deluded and enchanted them, through the *cup of the wine of his fornications.*

Thus the whole world is overcome by antichrist, and cannot, by all their highest attainments discern him from Christ; only they, who are born of God, and are his true children, and, being plain, simple, meek, and lowly in spirit, are taught of God; these only know antichrist, and overcome him; but these are the little flock.

Secondly, In that the world hears the ministers of antichrist.

We are given to understand, that men that are of a worldly spirit, and through that, are addicted to the world, and so seek and follow after the profits, pleasures, and honours of this life, they cannot possibly understand

the impostures and deceits of antichrist and his teachers, but they all are seduced and overcome by them.

Whoever therefore do profess or pretend to religion and godliness, and nevertheless live in the spirit of this world, and are swallowed up with the cares and comforts of this world, all such christians are a fit prey for antichrist: Seeing,

1. Such carnal christians are so addicted to worldly occasions, that they cannot attend to the word of God in the spiritual sense of it, which is only known by temptation, prayer, and God's own teaching. And hereupon they want the true light, by which only antichrist can be discerned. For antichrist comes in so great subtilty and likeness to Christ, that he cannot be perceived, but by christians much acquainted with the word, and much mortified and quickened through it.

2. Such carnal christians as they, neglect the word in the spirituality of it, so also they do love this world, and this quenches in their hearts the love of God: as *John* saith, *If any man love this world, the love of the Father is not in him;* now they whose hearts are inwardly destitute of the true love of God, and yet do outwardly profess and worship God, all these are a fit prey for antichrist.

And thus the world, loving and seeking itself, and its own things, receives antichrist whilst it cannot discern him. Wherefore the scriptures do every where give christians so many warnings against covetousness, which takes from men all true desire after Christ, and all regard, sense, and knowledge of antichrist. Christ therefore said to his disciples, *Take heed and beware of covetousness; for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also,* &c. And thus all they, who are lovers of themselves, and of this world, the greater outward profession they make of religion, the more ready are they to receive and entertain the ministers of antichrist,

and their doctrine, seeing they are, and speak, of the world.

3. Seeing the world hears antichrist, and his teachers, we are to take notice, that the carnal and antichristian ministers have a numerous auditory, all the worldly people cleaving and joining to them, because they speak that which is in their hearts. And therefore it is said, *Rev.* xvii. 15. *That the waters, whereon the great whore,* (that is, the ecclesiastical state, which chiefly consists in the clergy,) *sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues;* so that the false prophets have all the world to hear them, except the faithful and spiritual people, and multitude is a certain sign of their church. And *Rev.* xv. 7. it is said, that *power was given to antichrist, over all kindreds, and nations; and that all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.*

And thus hath antichrist multitudes, even the whole world, to follow his teachers, and to submit to them. But let not the true church, and little flock of crucified Jesus, be offended hereat, seeing, they are but the world who hear antichrist's teachers, that is, they are such people,

1. Whose inward nature is earthly, carnal, devilish.

2. Such, who love an outward form of religion and godliness, whilst they are bitter enemies to the power of it.

3. Such, who love such a doctrine and religion, as may stand with their old corrupt nature, and may beautify and support it; and so may make them painted sepulchres, outwardly fair, whilst they are inwardly abominable.

4. Such, who love the word, in the sense of their own mind, but hate and abhor it, in the sense of Christ's mind; and reckon it so, to be the greatest error and heresy in the world.

5. Such, as so profess Christ and his gospel, as to make them serve their own worldly ends and advantages, with-

out the least regard or respect had to Christ's true kingdom.

6. Such, as love themselves and their own things, the provisions of the flesh, and a quiet, easy, and commodious life, better than Christ Jesus and his things.

7. In a word, they are such, as under the glorious profession, and subtil pretence of Christ's church, are truly and inwardly the church of the devil and antichrist.

Such a people, and no other, have antichrist to hear them, and to embrace and depend on them, and their doctrine, ministry, and ordinances; that is, the multitude of false and carnal christians, which are almost the whole world of the outward professors of the gospel and christianity. For as antichrist and his prophets are of the world, and speak of the world, so also the world hears them.

And thus much for the fifth point.

The sixth point.

In the sixth place the apostle shews, how the Spirit of truth and error may be known in the people, as well as in the teachers, to wit, by the peoples cleaving to the teachers of truth, or to the teachers of error, saying, *ver.* 6.

We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

We are of God; to wit, according to his new workmanship in Christ Jesus, through which we partake of the true nature of God in Christ, as members, as Christ himself doth partake of that nature, as head; and being thus of God, we cannot but confess God, his name, and truth, in our heart, mouth, and life.

He that knoweth God, heareth us; that is, he that knoweth God, through the teaching of God, knoweth us who are born and taught of God; because we speak to them of God, and the things of God, as God himself hath taught them of himself, and of his things; and therefore they readily receive from us that testimony of the truth, which

God himself, either hath already inwardly taught them, or doth teach them by his Spirit, whilst we yet speak by that spirit. And so they hear us, by being satisfied, and acquiescing, or being at rest, in the true and wholesome, and saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, which we teach. *Hereby know we the Spirit of truth,* to wit, in the hearers; when they cleave to the truth of the Spirit, or to the truth, as it is and dwells in Jesus, published by the teachers of truth.

It follows.

He that is not of God heareth not us; that is, he that is not of God, through a new birth, and the renewing of the Spirit, and so is destitute of the divine nature, or of the eternal word and Spirit, which, through his unbelief, have no place in his heart: He that, thus, is not of God, but contrarily is of the devil, through sin, error, darkness, death, enmity to God, and his whole evil nature, he heareth not us; that is, he doth not taste, and relish, and approve, and receive, and embrace, and love the word of faith, and mystery of Christ and his gospel, which we teach; but doth rather hate, oppose, reproach and persecute our doctrine.

And hereby know we also the spirit of error, to wit, in the hearers, when they do not receive the word of truth from the teachers of truth, but do contrarily cleave to human, and philosophical, or moral, or formal, and national doctrine, published and held forth by the teachers of error.

Now hence it is evident, that there are two heads, or chief teachers in the world, which are Christ and antichrist; and also, that there are two seeds, or generations, which flow from them, begotten by their doctrine: The one is Christ's seed, the other is antichrist's seed; and each sort of these people, do join themselves to their several and proper heads; and by this they are certainly distinguished, known, and discerned.

Antichrist and his false teachers, who are the head of the malignant church and people, they come in great pomp and glory, as to the eye of the world, being beautified and dignified with degrees, names, and titles; being exalted to great honour, authority, and power; being full of fleshly wisdom, rhetorical eloquence, and philosophical learning; and so, to human judgment, they are the most considerable persons in the church, and very angels of light in appearance. And they, being thus adorned and beautified, to the pleasing and content of the world, all the world come in, and commit fornication with them, and do hear and receive them, and are conquered by their enchantments.

But Christ and his teachers come in true humility, and self-denial, and meekness, and lowliness, and without the titles and glories of the false teachers, which they utterly despise and refuse; and without all excellency of speech, and wisdom, and learning of this world; and these do contradict the religion and righteousness of the world, and speak the truth which is of God, by the Spirit which is of God: and these teachers, all the true sheep of Christ, the faithful flock, do own and acknowledge, and they come and hear the words of their lips; being assured, that it is not they that speak, but the Spirit of their Father which speaks in them.

For the body and members of Christ, do necessarily cleave to Christ their head; and the body and members of antichrist, do in like manner necessarily cleave to antichrist their head. And as the body and members of Christ do cleave to Christ their head, and to those that are in his Spirit, and will not join to antichrist, and to those that are in his spirit; so also the body and members of antichrist, do cleave to antichrist their head, and those that are in his spirit, and will not join to Christ, and to those that are in his Spirit.

For such as the body itself is, such a head will it

choose to itself; and so a spiritual, heavenly and faithful people, will join themselves to such a teacher, or rather to Christ himself, in and through him: And a carnal, worldly, and unbelieving people, will join themselves to such a teacher, and to antichrist himself in and through him.

Wherefore, as they that hear the true teachers, and Christ in them, and do join and cleave by faith to the word and doctrine which they hear, knowing that it is of God, as all such are certainly of God, even his true children and people, and the true sheep of Christ, inasmuch as they know his voice, and cleave to it: So they that hear the false teachers, and antichrist in them, and do cleave to their doctrine and ministry, and do like, commend, and applaud that, all such are not of God, but of their father the devil, and the true and natural members and people of antichrist.

And this very doctrine, Christ himself hath clearly taught in his gospel; as *John* v. 43. where he saith to the Jews, *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; another shall come in his own name, and him ye will receive.* That is, the unbelieving Jews would not come and cleave to Christ as their head, though coming in the name of God, that is, in the true power, wisdom, and righteousness of God, because they were none of Christ's own sheep; but antichrist, coming in his own name, that is, in his own power, wisdom, and righteousness, they receive him, and join to him as to their own true and natural head. And again, *John* viii. 47. Christ saith to the Jews, *He that is of God, heareth God's word; ye therefore hear it not, because ye are not of God.*

Whence it appears, that to hear and cleave to the true word of God, taught and held forth by Christ and his prophets, is a manifest token that men are of God; but to turn away from it, and to despise it, and to embrace another doctrine, is as manifest a sign, that they are not

of God, but of the devil; as Christ saith, to the same people, *ver.* 44. *Ye are of your Father the devil; for there is no truth in him, and he abides not in the truth, no more do ye.* Again, *John* x. 4, 5. Christ saith, *His own sheep follow him, the true Shepherd, because they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers.*

Wherefore, they that hear the word of faith, in the true teachers of the gospel, they have in them the Spirit of truth; but they that dislike and disrelish that word, and join to the teachers and doctrine of antichrist, they all have in them the spirit of error.

And therefore it concerns us, more than the world is aware of, to take heed whom we hear: For if we cleave to the teachers of truth, as hath been declared, then have we the Spirit of truth; but if to the teachers of error, then are we of the spirit of error.

And thus this scripture teacheth us how to know and discern the Spirit, both of Christ and of antichrist, and that both in the teachers and in the hearers; both which are of great use to the true church of God in all times, but especially in these last times. And these things I have spoken and testified freely, according to the measure of grace given, knowing that they will be as acceptable to the true friends and members of Christ crucified, as they are troublesome and displeasing to the members of antichrist.

A

PLAIN AND NECESSARY

CONFUTATION

OF DIVERS GROSS AND

ANTICHRISTIAN ERRORS,

DELIVERED

TO THE UNIVERSITY CONGREGATION, AT THE

PUBLIC COMMENCEMENT, Anno 1653.

BY MR SYDRACH SIMPSON,

MASTER OF PEMBROKE HALL IN CAMBRIDGE.

Potentior est veritas quam eloquentia, potior spiritus quam ingenium, major, fides quam eruditio: Et ut Paulus ait, stultum Dei sapientius est hominibus. *Luther. Epist. ad Caspar. Bornerum. Profes. Lipsens.*

Non est istud temeritas, sed fides; neque inconsideratio, sed ratio; neque furor, sed fiducia. *Hilarius lib. contr. Constantium Augustum.*

An *Apology* to the *Reader*, touching the following Reply to Mr *Sydrach Simpson's* Sermon.

IF it shall seem grievous to any, that I have dealt thus freely and plainly with Mr *Sydrach Simpson*, one of the first Pastors of an Independent Congregation in *England;* let them consider how *Paul* dealt with those brethren, *Gal.* ii. to whom, according to his right zeal, and the present occasion, *he gave no place by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with the Galatians;* and though those brethren seemed to be somewhat, yet, saith *Paul, whatever they are, it makes no matter to me, seeing God accepteth no man's person:* And so, notwithstanding their reputation, he did not spare them. Yea, let them consider how *Paul* at *Antioch* withstood *Peter* to the face, for dissembling with the Jews in the case of the Gentiles, and for not *walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel:* wherefore *Paul* did publickly and sharply reprove him before them all. For no true believer is to keep silence, when the doctrine of the gospel is corrupted by the doctrines of men, or is to be modest in this matter. Wherefore I was compelled to speak thus plainly to him, for his gross prevarication in the things of God: and I am well satisfied in my conscience in the discharge of my duty, whatever shall be the censure of carnal christians, who have no true sense of the glory of Christ's gospel; or of the profit of his people, whom yet Christ so loved, as to lay down his life, and to be crucified, for them.

Again, if it shall offend any, that I deal thus roundly against human learning; let them know, that I am not against human learning upon all accounts, but do allow human learning, so it be sober and serious, in its own place and sphere, as well as other human things: But I do oppose it as it is made another *John* Baptist, to pre-

pare the way of Christ into the world, or to prepare the world's way to Christ: And also, as men make it necessary for the true knowledge of scriptures; yea, the very unction for the ministry.

And herein, according to the grace of Christ, I both do and will contend against it for ever: Seeing human learning mingled with divinity, or the gospel of Christ understood according to *Aristotle*, hath begun, continued and perfected the mystery of iniquity in the outward church. Wherefore I do in all boldness appear for Christ, the wisdom of God, against human learning, the wisdom of the world; knowing assuredly, that he is as very antichrist, who opposes Christ as the wisdom of God, as he that opposes him, as the power and righteousness of God: and men may as well bring into the church of God another righteousness than Christ, and another power than Christ, as another wisdom than Christ. Wherefore, as they who bring in human righteousness, that is, civil or moral righteousness, or any works or duties of men for righteousness, into the church of Christ, they are true antichrists in so doing; seeing herein they are contrary to, and do oppose Christ the righteousness of God: And as they who bring in human power, or the secular arm into the church of Christ, to do or leave undone, to reward or punish, to promise or threaten, to encourage or discourage by that, they are true antichrists in so doing; seeing herein they are contrary to, and do oppose Christ, the power of God: So also, they that bring in human wisdom, or the learning and philosophy of men, into the church of Christ, they also are true antichrists in so doing; for herein they are contrary to, and do oppose Christ, the wisdom of God; for Christ is, and is to be, the only power, the only wisdom, and the only righteousness in the church of God; and he that brings in any other power, wisdom or righteousness, besides Christ himself, that man is, in very deed,

antichrist. And in this matter also, it was necessary that I should be bold for Christ against antichrist.

3. Again, if any shall be offended that I speak thus freely against the universities, which are of such honourable esteem every where in the nation, especially with the ignorant and vulgar people, and with men of all sorts, who have not the right knowledge of Christ and his gospel; wherein are so contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that no part of this treasury is left out thereof, to enrich heathenish philosophy withal, which, by the gospel, is left as a desolate thing, empty and destitute of all true wisdom and knowledge: I say, if any think that I have too deeply censured these universities; let them know, that I have done, in this matter, but as *Wickliff*, *Hus*, *Luther*, and several others, holy men of God, and happy instruments in the hand of Christ, have done before me. As for instance:

Wickliff terms the universities, *castra Cainitica*, Cain's castles; *synagogas Satana*, the synagogues of Satan, and affirms that they were never ordained or instituted by Christ.

John Hus, or *Otho Brunfelsius*, if he set out the contents of the chapters, calls them, *satrapas antichristi*, the lieutenants of antichrist.

Luther, in his book *Contra Ambrosium Catharinum*, shewing out of *Daniel* the prophet, that antichrist is *rex facierum*, the king of faces, or appearances; he affirms that the universities are one of those faces of antichrist; and that they are very comely or sightly to look on, and yet, indeed, are a very chaos, and open gate of hell; and that, in these, the most choice youth of christian people are prostituted, and are cast into the open throat of hell: and that, in these *Aristotle* is read, whereby the wits of christian youth are possessed and busied with human and heathenish learning; yea, are quite blinded and oppressed with it.

He saith also, that the universities are the woe that the fifth angel, mentioned in *Rev.* ix. brought upon the earth: and that, whoever it was that did first institute and confirm universities, he was a star fallen from heaven to earth: to wit, from the gospel of Christ to human learning.

And in his exposition on *Psal.* xxii. he calls the universities the mothers of learned men, the gates of hell; and saith, they are called *scholæ*, that is, schools, *ludi*, that is, plays, by a fatal name; seeing they make sport with the scriptures, and cast lots upon them, as upon the garments of Christ, every one dividing to himself a share of them, according to his own human and philosophical apprehension. And he saith, that the doctors of these universities are, by the same providence, called *doctores scholastici*, that is, school doctors; *ludicri, vel illusorii*, that is, trifling, or may-game doctors.

Again, he saith, those most glorious mothers of studies, the universities, stink before God with most loathsome abomination.

These universities are those antichristian soldiers, who put a reed into Christ's right hand instead of a sceptre: and this reed is philosophy, that vain deceit, or, as the apostle elsewhere terms it, the operation of error: *by which philosophy*, saith he, *the unhappy people of Christ began to be governed*, that is, to be seduced, and to be led away from the gospel of God. And this vain reed they put into his right hand, by preferring learning before godliness; saying, according to their usual manner of speaking, he is a learned, and a godly man; hereby making learning to take place of godliness. And yet this philosophy is nothing but a weak reed, which counterfeits a sceptre, rather than represents it, and so is nothing but vain deceit; for there is nothing propounded in such doctrine, but vanity and lying, though under the title of knowledge and religion.

In a word, he calls them *antichristi lupanaria*, the stews of antichrist.

Melancthon also terms the universities, *domos mendacii*, "houses of lies;" and saith, "It is manifest that "they are all heretical, by their school divinity; which "all the schools in *Europe* have received from the uni-"versity of *Paris*, and are thereby infected with heresy;" and he saith, "The students in the universities, are not "the people of the gospel, nor yet of the law, but are the "people of *Aristotle's* morals*."

And thus it is manifest that others have spoken freely and sharply against the universities before now. And therefore, wise and godly christians will have no just cause to be offended at me, who have spoken in like manner, having the same cause.

Objection. Now if any shall object, that they all spake against popish universities, and that our universities are otherwise now, than they were then; and so, there is not the same cause to speak against them now, as there was heretofore.

To this I answer; That though the outward form of gross popery be taken away from them, as also from the rest of the people of this nation, God having put it into the hearts of the civil power to reject it, after the light of the gospel had begun to shine to them; yet are the brains, heart, bowels, bones, marrow, sinews and blood of the universities, the self-same now as heretofore; and though the outside of it hath passed under a very little change, yet the inner parts of it remain as before, in the full strength of antichrist's kingdom, and that without any alteration at all. For the self-same statutes of the universities and colleges still remain with them in force, which were at first given to them by their popish founders, through the help of antichrist: and these statutes

* Omnes scholas esse hereticas, vel theologia scholastica arguit, *Melanct. in Apol. pro Mart. Luther.*

are of such authority with them, that they depart from the rule of Christ's gospel, to walk by the rules of sinful men, for worldly stipends and rewards sake. Farther, the same philosophy or heathenism, and the same school divinity or antichristianism, are yet instilled into the youth and students, as were many hundred years ago, in the darkest times of popery: and these things are all in all in the university learning and education; insomuch, that no man is of any esteem and reckoning with them, let him know the gospel of Christ ever so soundly and truly, if he be not, as they speak, a good philosopher, and school divine. So that the university, for its inside, is the self-same now, as it was in *Wickliff*, *Hus*, or *Luther's* time, being informed and possessed with the same heathenish and antichristian doctrine now as then: yea, many of the self-same outward and antichristian forms and follies still remain with them, more than with any other people in the nation; even to their hoods, caps, scarlet robes, doctoral ring, kiss, gloves, their doctoral dinner and music: neither could they ever yet, to this day find in their hearts to lay aside their very prævaricator, which is some notable varlet, picked out of the university, and brought forth in the presence of all the heads, students, scholars, and all the great resort of ministers and people, at their public commencement, to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience before them all; and in open defiance of the gospel, which stands in faith and love, to abuse, and deride, and jeer, and reproach all sorts of persons, of all ages, sexes, professions, and this presently after their divinity acts; which is a wickedness, the very heathen would be ashamed of; and which plainly declare what kind of divinity is taught and learned in the university, which can endure, allow, countenance, and be merry at that, which so highly contradicts God's word, and grieves his holy Spirit: yet, because it makes them merry after a full dinner, and

puts more joy into their hearts than the holy scriptures, they could hitherto dispense with it to this day.

And so, however religion, for the outward form, hath been much reformed in these nations; yet the universities, as the strongest holds which antichrist hath had amongst us, have still remained much the same, not only as to the inward substance of all things, to wit, their statutes, philosophy, and divinity, but also in a great measure to their outward forms, as they were in their first antichristian institution.

Wherefore it was necessary also, that I should be plain and free for Christ's sake, and his church's, against these, as *Luther* calls them, stews of antichrist, and dens of thieves; who have been, and still are, the constant and fruitful seed of antichrist's kingdom in the world, out of which it might suddenly, on all occasions, and opportunities, grow up afresh, how greatly soever it had been before wasted and destroyed among the people, by the clear word of God, and his mighty providences and works accompanying it.

Now as it was necessary this work should be done, so, through the grace of Christ, was I made willing to do it, seeing nobody else more fit and able did appear. And well knowing, that he that provokes the universities and clergy against him, provokes "principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world" against him; as is evident in the example of *Wickliff*, *Hus*, *Luther*, *Tindal*, and others: I have therefore, according to Christ's counsel, sat down and counted the cost of this undertaking, and after all, do say, *the Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* And so I commit thee, Christian Reader, to that grace which is from God, to keep thee in this new hour of temptation, if the Lord suffer it to come forth upon the earth.

4. Again, if any shall object, in reading this reply, that I myself make use of human learning, whilst I speak against it.

I *answer;* What part of philosophy is here made use of? or who of the heathens are here quoted? I have chiefly made use of the testimony of some faithful christians, who have lived in several ages, and yet have all witnessed, by the same Spirit, the same truth. And it is no more human learning to quote believers in the church since Christ, than to quote the patriarchs and prophets before Christ, or the apostles and evangelists, which immediately followed him.

5. And last of all. If any say, I myself relate to the university, why then do I speak against it thus?

I *answer;* That I neither do, nor will relate to the university, as it is polluted with any of the abominations herein mentioned: But as, by the providence of God alone, I have been brought to that relation in which I now stand, and continue in it, against the wills and workings of many; so, through his good pleasure, I will remain, till he shall otherwise dispose of me; and during my sojourning with them, I will not fail to testify against their evil, and to endeavour to win all those, whom God shall persuade to receive his truth, from heathenism to the gospel, and from antichrist to Christ.

Wherefore, let none be offended that I am made willing to hazard and part with my worldly accommodations for Christ's name sake; but let them rather praise the grace of God, which hath enabled me to witness a good confession, whatever worldly disadvantage I might run into thereby. Wherefore, welcome the righteousness, power, wisdom, truth, word, and whole kingdom of Christ, though they swallow up all my earthly accommodations; For such fear and love of his name, hath the Lord graciously put into my heart, that I would not willingly conceal any thing of his most precious truth, either to gain or to preserve to myself the whole world. And so, righteous Father, not my will be done, nor theirs, but *thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

THE

CONFUTATION

OF

MR SYDRACH SIMPSON'S ERRORS.

ISAIAH lxii. 1.

For Sion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns.

MASTER *Sydrach Simpson*, at the commencement, *Anno.* 1653, preaching to the University Congregation in *Cambridge*, and to many others, especially ministers there gathered together at that time, from several parts of the nation, among other things, he let fall in that discourse of his, these gross and antichristian errors.

The rehearsal of the errors.

1. " He brought in that scripture, 2 *Kings* vi. 1, 2, which was his text: the words whereof are these, *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now the place where we dwell with thee, is too strait for us; let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place where we may dwell: and he answered, Go ye.* This scripture he used to prove the lawfulness and religiousness of the present universities, and the usefulness and necessity of human learning to the church and ministry of the New Testament. And what the scripture speaks of those schools, he brought to countenance, encourage and justify these: adding, that if it were objected, that that was the Old Testament: he did answer, that the Old and New were

not distinct Testaments, but administrations: thereby holding forth, that the universities now, are answerable to the schools of the prophets that were then; and that the universities are as agreeable to the New Testament, as the schools of the prophets to the old.

2. That they who have endeavoured to pull down schools, have always been men who were found enemies to religion. So *Julian* the apostate shut up the doors of the schools, because he would have all religion go down.

3. That the knowledge of heavenly things cannot come to us but by things on earth, and that all divinity is swadled in human learning.

4. That *Paul* was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; and that God took him so fitted, and made him an able minister of his church.

5. That men's hatred to God, doth as well appear in their hatred to human learning, as if they hated the scriptures.

6. That if the Spirit teach without means, men may as well be without the ordinances, as without the universities and human learning.

7. That men now are not to receive the Spirit, in that immediate way to understand the scriptures, in which it was given to them who wrote the scriptures.

8. That men now are to get knowledge by studies and human learning, and not by inspiration.

9. That human learning is as the out-works to the fort of the gospel, and as the outer court to the temple of the gospel: and so, if you will keep the fort well, you must keep the out-works strong; and if you will preserve the inward, you must look to the outward court.

10. But what is the bottom of all this, saith he, to wit, of some men's appearing against human learning, as the unction of the ministry, and against the universities, as the fountain of the ministry, but this? that some say, they

are one with Christ; and as Christ hath the divine nature in him, so every believer hath; and he that hath God in him, need not go to any man to learn; whereas in *John*, xvi. Christ speaketh of believers, as at an infinite distance from him: And if believers be so united to Christ as they say, then will follow, that Christ should not be the only begotten of God; and that Christ and we should be equal, and he not our Lord, &c.

11. Arts and tongues are the cups in which God drinks to us.

12. We shall never keep up religion, if we keep not up learning: but when learning goes down, religion goes down too.

13. Seeing religious foundations are so ancient, then keep them up: your destruction will never be but from yourselves."

These notes were taken from Mr. *Simpson's* mouth, and delivered to me by an honest hand, and affirmed to be true for the substance of them; and I also heard several others, who were hearers of that sermon, relating the same things.

Now, because I find that this doctrine hath not only grieved the hearts of the faithful, but also strengthened the hands of the carnal and evil people: The things which he then delivered, being usually the thoughts of their hearts, and words of their mouths; I thought it my duty, being set in my place for the defence of the gospel, to give a public reply to such gross errors, so publickly delivered, to the danger of so many; and which, one would never have thought should have proceeded from such a man; especially after the day of the gospel hath so far dawned, and the antichristian shadows are so far retreated, and flown away.

And so I shall begin with the first of these errors, and proceed in the order in which they are set down.

1. ERROR.

He brought that scripture, 2 *Kings* vi. 1, 2. touching the sons of the prophets, asking leave of *Elisha* to go and build at *Jordan*, to prove the lawfulness and religiousness of the universities, in their present use and customs, &c.

Answer. To this I reply, that there is a vast difference between those schools, and these universities; as in many other things, so chiefly in this; that in those schools of the prophets, named by him, the holy men of God freely taught the youth, who came willingly to them to learn, especially in the corrupt times of *Israel* and *Judah;* I say, they taught them only the knowledge of the books of *Moses*, and of the other prophets then extant, and no heathenish knowledge, or disciplines of the Gentiles at all. And these kind of schools began early in the church: For the fathers before the flood, and the patriarchs after, all taught their children and families the word of God; and so each of their families was such a school. And that we may not be at uncertainties in this matter, it is manifest what doctrine they taught, by that which God himself saith of *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 19. *I know Abraham*, saith God, *that he will command his children and houshold after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment:* This was the sum of *Abraham's* doctrine to his family. And this is farther confirmed by that of *Asaph*, *Psalm* lxxviii. 2,—4. Where he saith, *I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us: We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come, the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and the wonderful works that he hath done:* Where we plainly see what doctrine the children received from their parents, and the parents taught their children from one

generation to another; to wit, not vain philosophy, and the disciplines of the heathens, *but the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and wonderful works.* This also is manifest by the practice of *Jehosaphat* king of *Judah*, who sent his princes with the *Levites*, up and down throughout *Judah*, and they only took *the book of the law of the Lord with them*, and no heathenish authors, *and taught the people*, 2 Chron. xvii.

And *Ezra*, after the peoples return from *Babylon*, took only the book of the law of *Moses*, and read it to them; and the *Levites* also, *read in the book of the law of God distinctly to the people, and gave them the sense, and caused them to understand it*, Nehem. viii.

And this also, *James* the apostle witnesseth, *Acts* xv. 21. saying, *Moses of old time, hath in every city, them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.*

So that the faithful prophets of the Lord, during all the Old Testament, had the chief care in their schools, to keep the word of the Lord among them in a right sense, according to the mind of the Spirit. For seeing the Lord's people are his portion, they knew they were to be carefully educated and instructed in the right knowledge of the scriptures, to prepare them for the Lord, and to make them meet for his kingdom. And the keeping of the word and doctrine of God pure, is one of the greatest matters of all in the church of God: For as the word is, such is the worship, such is the faith, such is the conscience, such is all. Wherefore, the holy men of God, would by no means bring in the philosophy or doctrine of the heathens into their schools, to teach that to their sons, or scholars; but only the true, faithful, and unmixed word of God.

Objection. And if against this it be objected, that *Moses* was learned in all the learning of the *Egyptians*.

Answer. To this I reply: But did *Moses* ever teach

any of that learning in the church, or publish any of the doctrines of it? Or did he command, or encourage any of the people of God to learn it? Or did any other of the prophets of the Lord, in any age, teach their sons or scholars any of the *Egyptian* philosophy, which was the most ancient, or the *Smaragdine* table of *Hermes Trismegistus*, the pretended scholar of *Moses*, so much boasted of, or any other heathenish author whatsoever, of which there were many then extant? I say, let them prove, that one heathenish author was read by any of the prophets to their scholars, and then they will have some colour for the present universities, and their practice: But this they can never do, during all the Old Testament.

And now, for the New Testament, it is well known, that Christ himself, who was the Son of God, made of a woman, was the first and chief teacher of this doctrine: Even the Son, out of the bosom of the Father, full of grace and truth: and he set up the first christian school, and taught his twelve apostles, whom, at his own pleasure, he chose to himself.

And what the doctrine was which he taught them, is manifest in the gospel; in all which, there is not one word of heathenish philosophy, or of the doctrines and traditions of men; but he only taught them the words of eternal life; which no man, nor angel, could teach: He teaches that word which is the power, wisdom, and righteousness of God; through which sin is forgiven, and righteousness is given; death is destroyed, and life is brought in; hell is put out, and heaven is planted, in all them that do believe: He teaches a word, through which the world is renewed, and men are made like angels, and are made meet to partake of the inheritance of saints: He teaches a word, wherein is contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in God himself.

And so Christ taught in his school no vain philosophy, or heathenish doctrine; and yet he came from God, and went to God, and is a pattern for doctrine to all true

Christians that are his disciples indeed: To whom he commanded, when he left the world, and went to his Father, *that they should teach all nations*, and gather one christian school out of them all, by teaching them *to observe and do whatsoever he had commanded them*, to wit, in the gospel; and nothing else, or more: He commanded them to teach all that, and only that: and promised himself to be with them to the end of the world, in all such doctrine.

And the apostles accordingly, not by any help of human learning, but when they had received the Spirit, went forth to teach the nations, and to set up christian schools every where by their doctrine; and they all only taught Jesus, and the resurrection from the dead.

Thus *Peter* first taught the men of *Judea*, and inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, *That God had made Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ; having raised him from the dead, because it was not possible for him to be holden of death, who was the Lord and author of life.*

And *Stephen*, disputing with the *Libertines*, *Cirenians*, and *Alexandrians*, and divers philosophers of *Cilicia* and *Asia*, did hold forth to them nothing but Christ; and that *He should put an end to the temple and law, and should change all the customs of Moses.* And, *They were not able to resist the wisdom and Spirit by which he spake*, Acts vi.

And *Paul*, at the university of *Athens*, reproved their heathenism, and taught nothing among the Epicureans and Stoicks, and other sects of philosophers, *but the resurrection of Christ, and his kingdom and judgment.* Acts xvii.

He also disputed daily in the school of one *Tyrannus*, and that for two years together, and persuaded only the things touching the kingdom of God, brought into the world by Jesus Christ, *Acts* xix. And he so prevailed with his doctrine, *that many which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burnt them before all*

men; and the price of them was counted at fifty thousand pieces of silver:* So that, as the gospel prevailed, and the name of Christ was magnified, so did people renounce philosophy, and burn their books of curious arts: To recover which books again out of their ashes, if it might be, our university would give as much money, if they could procure it from good benefactors, as they were then valued at by the heathen. So that as they, through the efficacy of the gospel, of heathens became christians, and threw away all other learning, and burnt their books of great value, lest they should infect others: So on the contrary, in our universities of pretended christians, men usually become true heathens; never valuing the precious gospel of God our Saviour, as they do other heathenish and philosophical books.

Farther, the same *Paul* dwelt afterwards at *Rome*, two whole years, in his own hired house, and during all that time, *Preached only the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness:* But taught not one word of philosophy.

He also at *Corinth*, a great and famous city of *Greece*, full of philosophers and orators, taught nothing among them, *but Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that believe, both of Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i.

And as he made no use of human learning all this while, so in 1 *Cor.* ii, he plainly renounces it, and rejects it; saying,

Ver. 1. *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.*

Ver. 2. *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

* About 1250*l.*

Ver. 3. *And I was with you in weakness, and fear, and much trembling.*

Ver. 4. *And my speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power.*

Ver. 5. *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.*

Ver. 6. *Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to nought.*

Ver. 7. *But we speak the wisdom of God, in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory,* &c.

Ver. 13. *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

In a word, this whole chapter tends to the utter rejection of philosophy, which is the wisdom of the world, in the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of God.

He also, in his epistle to the *Colossians, chap.* ii. gives forth another plain testimony against philosophy, desiring, *ver.* 2. *That the hearts of the believers might be comforted, and that they might be knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;* And this, saith he, *I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words:* Wherefore, *ver.* 8. saith he, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments or elements of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.* Here is a sufficient caution against philosophy, for the true church for ever. For what need we, if we are true

christians, to turn aside for wisdom and knowledge, and learning, and curious arts, to the heathen, seeing God hath given Christ to us, *in whom is treasured up all the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of wisdom and knowledge, whereby the whole world was made, and every creature formed and fashioned; and in which it hath its being, subsistence, and operation?* Yea, in this Christ *dwells all the fulness of the infinite and eternal God, and he is the head of all principality and power, in earth and heaven;* and there is in him alone, infinitely enough to make us wise and learned for ever; without calling in the help and contributions of the vain philosophers, and their foolish wisdom. It is enough for christian schools, to be taught to know Christ, by the ministration of the Spirit; and all other learning that is out of Christ, though it seem to be never so high and deep, all faithful christians are to reject it, as mere sophistry and deceit.

And thus you see that the apostles, as well as Christ, taught their scholars and disciples only the gospel, and spake not one word for philosophy, but directly against it.

And the following fathers, and next teachers of the christian church after the apostles, they also obeyed the command of Christ, and followed the example of the apostles in this matter. For the bishops and presbyters, that is, the overseers and elders, had tender regard to the children of christians, and did teach them, as well as the people, the pure doctrine of the gospel; they held forth to them Christ crucified, and did exhort them to faith, new obedience, the confession of Christ, and patient suffering; and did not at all intermingle philosophy with their divinity, but always rejected and condemned it, all along the first and purest times of the christian church; till the mystery of iniquity began to arise, and did cunningly insinuate itself into the church, by the means of human learning.

And here it will not be amiss to relate what *Justin Martyr* saith of himself, as to this matter; who was. before his conversion to the christian faith, a great philosopher: and lived about 150 years after Christ's nativity: He, in his dialogue with *Trypho*, relates, "How first he joined himself to that sect of philosophers called the Stoicks, and after to the peripateticks, after to the Pythagorean sect, and after to the Platonists; but had no satisfaction in his mind by all this knowledge: But at last, beholding the torments and sufferings of christians, and seeing them bear them with such comfort and constancy, he did thereby conceive that it was impossible for that kind of people to be subject to any vice, or carnality; which vices of their own nature, are not able to sustian any sharp adversity, much less the bitterness of death. And hereupon he began to love and search after the christian religion: and being afflicted in mind, he did withdraw himself into a solitary place, where there met him an old ancient father, of comely visage, and gentle behaviour, who began to reason with him, and to tell him that there was no knowledge of truth among the plilosophers, who neither knew God, nor were aided by his holy Spirit: And did farther reason with him of the immortality of the soul, of the reward of the godly, and punishment of the wicked. Then *Justin*, being satisfied with his reasons, yielded to him, and demanded of him, how he might attain to that true knowledge of God, whereof he had spoken? Who counselled him to read the scriptures, adjoining therewith, prayer, &c.

And as this *Justin* left all other learning, and betook himself only to the scriptures; so in the understanding of the scriptures, he rejected all his philosophy, and philosophical apprehensions; saying, that "the interpreta-"tion of the scripture is to be accommodated to the will "of the doctrine of the Spirit, and not to human reason.

ings*." And that he might be sure and safe in all things, he had constant resource to the scriptures, thus understood. So that *Justin Martyr*, being effectually converted, wholly left his philosophy, and betook himself to the scriptures, and taught them to the church, as he had been taught them of God, by his Spirit.

Constantine the Emperor†, though he were the first that brought in the mystery of iniquity into the christian church, by mingling the civil and ecclesiastical states and laws together, there being in his time, a great increase of christians, through the ministry of the gospel, and a great confluence of them to his Imperial city, for the word's sake, he wrote to *Eusebius*, Bishop of *Nicomedia*, in a special letter, " Wherein he desired him, with all " diligence and speed, to procure fifty volumes of the " scriptures, to be written in parchment, well and legi- " bly, and in such a bigness or volume as might be car- " ried with the greatest ease; for the further teaching " and instructing of those that came to attain the know- " ledge of the christian religion:" Judging it most meet, that christian people should be instructed in the doctrine of Christ only, and not in heathenish philosophy.

And though afterwards, when the suffering times of the church began to be over, christians became more carnal and secure, and that in the very days of *Constantine*, and so began to decline the word of faith, and to seek after philosophy; yet had God, in all the ages of his church, some of his servants, who did reject it, and did cleave only to the word: among which, I shall only for the present, produce the testimonies of *Berno*, who lived above six hundred years ago, and *Zuinglius* of latter times.

Berno, who lived about the year 1008, and was a man furnished with all sorts of learning, saith, " That he had,

* Non ad humanas rationes, sed ad voluntatem doctrinæ Spiritus, interpretatio est accommodanda. *Justin. in Exposit. fidei.*

† Euseb. lib. 4. de vita Constantin.

"for many years, rejected as dung, the figments of the "poets, and the histories of the heathens, and the study "of secular letters, and had converted the whole inten- "tion of his mind to the word of God, and the divine "things contained therein*;" And accordingly, he taught no other doctrine to any.

Huldricus Zuinglius also, Pastor of *Zurich* in *Helvetia*, a man who had been educated in all kind of learning, and was after, through faith and the teaching of God, an eminent instrument in his church, he saith thus of himself; "When saith he, I being yet a youth, was ex- "ercised in all sorts of learning, I can truly say, that I "did not profit less than the rest of my equals: But "when, about seven years ago, I betook myself to the "study of the holy scriptures, then the things that I had "before sucked in, or learned from philosophers and "divines, did procure me so much trouble, that being "then moved by the authority of the scriptures, I judged "that all those things were to be cast away, and counted "as dung, and that the true mind of God, was only to "be received from his pure and simple word. And there- "fore I began humbly to intreat the Lord that he would "vouchsafe me his own light: By which means it shortly "came to pass, that the reading of the holy scriptures "did much delight and please me; and they being na- "kedly and alone propounded, did flow unto me with "more ease, than if I had read them divided and dis- "tracted with variety of comments‖." And as he rejected philosophy wholly, and entertained the word, so did

* *Berno* Augiensis abbas. Se multis jam annis poetarum figmenta et Paganorum historias, secularium que literarum studia, velut stercora respuisse; omnemque mentis intentionem ad divina perscrutanda convertisse. *In Epist. ad Magnifred.*

‖ Cum juvenis adhuc, in omni disciplinarum genere exercerer, certo affirmare possum, me non minus quam reliquos æquales meos profecisse, &c. *Zuingl. lib. de Certitud. & Veritat. Verbi Dei.*

he only teach this word to faithful christians, who are the only true school of Christ in the world.

Now by all this it appears, that the schools of the prophets and apostles, and of Christ himself the head of them, and of the most faithful christians, that followed Christ in the first and latter ages, were in no sort like the schools in the present universities, where human learning, according to the statutes of the universities, prevails for the first seven years, and they think, youth cannot be made good christians, except they be first made good heathens.

The schools of the prophets and apostles would not meddle with the philosophy of the heathen, but led the children and youth presently to the word of God, and therein to the true knowledge of God in Christ: But these schools first lead youth from God and his word, several years together, to the corrupt reason, wisdom, notions, conceptions; yea, to the idolatry, blasphemy, atheism, lusts, filthiness, and villanies of the heathen, that thereby, in a strange and antichristian method, they may be the fitter to know and understand the scriptures.

The schools of the prophets taught only *Moses* and the prophets, to the Jewish youth; and the schools of the apostles taught Christ only and his gospel, to the children of christians: But the universities lead men, both from *Moses* and from Christ, both from the law and the gospel, to the heathen, to make men hereby the more able christians and divines.

The queen of the south, neglecting the magi, or wise men of the heathen, came from the utmost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*: And the universities leave Christ, who is infinitely greater and wiser than *Solomon*, and go to the utmost parts of the earth for wisdom from the heathen. So that, in these universities, there hath been the greatest apostacy and withdrawing from Christ and the greatest dishonour and disparage-

ment offered to him and his gospel, as ever was known in all the world.

For, is it not a matter of greatest wonder and amazement, that after that word, which was with God, and was God, and is God, blessed for ever, hath been manifested in the flesh, and that flesh of his hath been justified by the Spirit, to have *the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in it bodily:* And, that this so wonderful a person hath come to his church, in the same common nature with it, filled with all the righteousness, wisdom, truth, power, life, peace and joy, and all the things of God; I say, is it not strange, that he, who alone comprehends the fulness of all things, and in whom are hid all the infinite treasures of divine and heavenly wisdom and knowledge; that he alone should not be counted sufficient and enough, no, not by those who pretend his name, to make us wise to salvation, which is the only true, excellent, and necessary wisdom in the world, and to make the man of God perfect, and the whole church of God complete? but to the great dishonour of Christ, yea, to the very rejection of Christ, the children of christians must be led from the doctrine of Christ, the Son of the living God, to the doctrine and disciplines of the wicked heathen: and to spend the prime and flower of their youth in these things? Who but antichrist himself could have brought in, and set up such an abomination of desolation in the church of God?

And yet, for the better credit of all things, must these corrupt heathenish schools be called "the schools of the prophets;" though nothing but the ignorance of the law and gospel be taught in them; and the highest enmity to Christ in all the world, lives and flourishes in them.

And thus, as the christian schools at first, brought men from heathenism to the gospel; so these schools carry men from the gospel to heathenism, as to their perfection.

And the fruit of this education of youth is manifest:

For where hath the gospel found less favour, and more enmity at any time, than from the universities?

Ridley the martyr, with *Cranmer* and others, being in prison in *Oxford* for the testimony of the gospel, writes thus to *Bradford*, "As yet, saith he, there was never a learned man, nor any scholar, or other that visited us, since we came into *Bocardo*."

And in another letter to him, he saith, "And yet, as "we hear, the scholars bear us more heavily than the "townsmen: A wonderful thing, among so many, never "yet scholar offered any of us, so far as I know, any "manner of favour, either for, or in Christ's cause*."

Yea further, where shall you see youth again in all the nation, so vain, proud, fantastical, bold, impudent? Where shall you meet with such mockers and scoffers at God, and his gospel, as here? How many hopeful youths have here been sacrificed to the heathen, and their careful parents, after much cost, have received them home as full of heathenish manners, as doctrine? And if some are lately become more civil, and seemingly religious; yet is their enmity to the gospel in its true spiritual sense, as it is the word of faith, nothing abated; for such as is the doctrine among them, such also of necessity must their consciences and lives be.

Wherefore the universities, according to their statutes and usual practice, are not the schools of the prophets, or of christians, but of heathen men; and *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, have more credit in the university, than *Moses*, or Christ himself. And, if after their course, or running their circle in philosophy, they betake themselves to divinity; yet do they so mingle, spoil, and corrupt it with philosophy, according to which they both understand the scriptures, and speak of them, that their divinity cannot

* *Fox*, vol. 3. p. 442, 443.

be called the doctrine of Christ, but of antichrist, being wholly contrary to the word of faith.

And therefore Mr *Simpson* was the more to blame for flattering them in their evils, and to deceive the world, in appropriating to them the glorious title of the schools of the prophets, who are in all things, so contrary and contradictory to them.

Now the sum and certainty of this matter, is this; That the congregations of believers, where only the word of the gospel is truly taught, according to the ministration of the Spirit, whether to youth or men, they, under the New Testament, are answerable to the schools of the prophets under the Old, who only taught *Moses* and the prophets: And the universities, wherein philosophy is first taught the youth, and after, divinity, and then both are mingled together, to the utter perverting and corrupting the gospel of Christ; I say, these universities, in the time of the gospel, are answerable to the high-places in the time of the law, where a doctrine and worship prevailed, which was not according to God's word, but man's will; and where Judaism and Heathenism were mingled together into one mungrel religion, most odious and abominable to God and his people: And so the universities, in the time of the gospel, are only answerable to the high-places in the time of the law: but not at all to the schools of the prophets, as Mr *Simpson* pretends.

And now, for the conclusion of this matter, which I reckon to be of great concernment for the true church to be thoroughly instructed in: I shall bring forth the testimony of some godly men; of whom some shew how the schools and universities of christians came first to be corrupted, to wit, by departing from the plain word of the gospel, and bringing in philosophy: And another foretels the reformation of the schools of christians again, to wit, by rejecting philosophy again, and bringing in the

word of faith. All which will serve as a confirmation of what hath been already spoken.

Matthias Parisiensis, a *Bohemian* by nation, who lived about the year 1380, wrote a large book against antichrist, wherein he affirms, "that antichrist had seduced "all universities and colleges of learned men; so that "now they teach no sincere doctrine, neither give any "true light to christians through their teaching*:" to wit, they being all corrupted through philosophy, and having, through that, corrupted all divinity.

And *John Hus*, that humble and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, and blessed martyr, saith, "That antichrist "hath seduced all carnal christians from divine wisdom, "which is full of salvation, and the holy Spirit, to the "wisdom and science of men, and of the princes of this "world; which wisdom and science, he hath exceedingly inlarged and increased, and made authentical, "and very gainful of riches and honours in this world: "that so, by those means, divine wisdom and science "might be neglected of christians, and grow old, and be "covered over, and be accounted as vile and unprofitable by them; and that, only that, which is high with "men, to wit, human learning, might be reckoned glorious and excellent, and of great authority with christian people†."

The same *Hus* saith, "That this human learning, wisdom and knowledge, antichrist doth perfectly subject "to himself, and his service, he being more mighty and "subtil through the operation of Satan, than all worldly

* *Matthias Parisiensis.* Antichristum omnes universitates et eruditorum collegia seduxisse, ita ut jam nihil sani doceant, aut christianis recte sua doctrina, præluceant. *Illyric. Flac. Catal. Test. Veritat.*

† Seduxit antichristus a divina sapientia, plena salute et spiritu sancto, ad prudentiam et scientiam hominum & principium hujus mundi: quam copiavit nimis vehementer, & dilatavit & authenticavit and lucrosam divitarum & honorum in hoc seculo effecit, ut ita divina sapientia & scientia esset neglecta a christianis, inveterata & obducta, & quasi vilis & inutilis ab iisdem reputata. &c. *Joh. Hus. lib. de vita & reg. antichr. cap.* 30.

" men, whom, with all their learning, disciplines and abi-
" lities, he strongly subjugates to himself, and doth espe-
" cially serve himself of these; wherefore saith *Job*,
" chap. xli. *sub ipso erunt radii solis, the beams of the*
" *sun shall be under him*, that is, the holy scripture, and
" the chief doctors and teachers of it: and he shall pre-
" pare gold as dirt, that is, he shall have all the
" wisdon and learning of men at his pleasure, and in
" great readiness, and with much ease, shall gain it to
" himself. And antichrist, by such men, saith *John Hus*,
" doth make his body, or church, strong against the saints
" of God, and well-favoured and glorious, that it may
" appear very taking to the world, and may win all men
" to it, that are not taught of God, and renewed by his
" Spirit." And thus antichrist serves himself of all learning and learned men; whereas divine learning, and the teaching of God, he could never, in any measure, subject to himself, but is always discovered, resisted and overcome by it.

Martin Luther saith, " That whosoever it was, whe-
" ther *Alexander* of *Hales*, or *Thomas* of *Aquine*, who
" first instituted universities; he was a star fallen from
" heaven to earth, who received the key of the bottom-
" less pit, and opened it, and brought forth into the
" church, philosophy, long ago dead and damned by the
" doctrine of the apostles; and from the smoke of the
" bottomless pit, that is, philosophy, came forth locusts
" on the earth; that is, saith he, *populus universitatum*,
" *e philosophia natus*, the people of the universities, born
" and bred of philosophy, &c." Thus *Luther**.

Abbas Joachim Calaber, who was long before these, and flourished about the year 1230, in his commentary on *Jeremiah* the prophet, speaks to this purpose, That the sixth angel, mentioned *Rev.* ix. opens the pottomless pit, and brings out philosophy into the church; and out

* *M. Luther. De Captiv. Babylon.*

of the smoke of this doctrine locusts proceeded, and are spread over all the church into every fruitful place; and these locusts, he saith, are *scholastici & magistri, qui nunc facie tenus blandiuntur ut decipiant, nunc cauda tenus feriunt ut subvertant simplices & incautos;* that is, "the locusts are scholars and masters, according to their "academical degrees, who sometimes flatter with their "countenances to deceive, and sometimes strike with "their tails, that they may subvert the simple and un-"advised. And to these scholars and masters, the ig-"norant and common people resort; and they open to "them the old cisterns of heathenish learning and dis-"ciplines, long ago stopt up by the doctrine of the apos-"tles: and these cisterns they open, by teaching philo-"sophy to the people: *But they shut up the living "fountain of saving water, that is, the word of faith:* "But the Spirit of the Lord, saith he, in the following "prophets, whom the Lord shall raise up, *Idola studi-"orum carnalium visitabit,* shall visit the idols of carnal "studies, maintained and kept up by secular stipends."

Further he saith, that "as antichrist brings forth his "mark, which is, philosophical doctrine, into the church "of Christ, and by this mark, all his teachers and peo-"ple are known; so there shall rise up against these, "such as have the mark of Christ, or the sign of *Thau* "in their foreheads, that is, the open and manifest doc-"trine of Christ crucified. And as the signs of *Moses* "destroyed the signs of the magicians, so shall the word "or preaching of the cross, destroy all philosophical "doctrine, and human and secular learning out of the "church." And then the children, and youth, and men of all ages, sorts, and conditions, shall be taught no other doctrine in the church of Christ, than that which is found in the scriptures, even in the writings of the prophets and apostles; and that not according to any human and philosophical understanding, but according to the teach-

ing and mind of the Spirit. "And God, by all his true "servants, shall destroy the studies of carnal doctors, "and masters in divinity, and shall dissipate all secular "and philosophical learning, by the word of truth in "their mouths." And so shall the church be reformed aright, when the doctrine of Christ only shall be received and esteemed, and shall live and flourish among christians.

And thus antichrist hath laid aside the scriptures, and all true spiritual and divine learning out of his schools and universities, and hath brought into them, instead thereof, philosophy and human learning; and so these schools are most unlike to the schools of the prophets: so in due time, when God shall undertake to reform his church, all this sort of learning shall be cast out again, as dirt and dung, and the plain word of the gospel only shall prevail and flourish among the christian people: Which time may the Lord hasten for his elects sake.

2. ERROR.

That they who have endeavoured to pull down schools, have always been men who were found enemies to religion; so *Julian* the apostate shut up the doors of the schools, because he would have all religion to go down.

Answer. True it is, that they who have sought the subversion of christian schools, wherein the doctrine of the gospel is purely taught, without the mixture of philosophy and heathenism, they all have been, and are very enemies to true religion: But they that seek to put down heathenish schools, and to erect christian, or to reform the schools of heathen into christian, or to remove heathenism out of christian schools, they are not, before God and good men, enemies to true religion, but the great friends of it. Nay, they that call heathenish schools by the name of christian, that they may still remain with the better credit in their heathenism, without any true reformation according to the gospel, I rather

judge them to be enemies to true religion, and friends only to their own profit, preferment and ends.

Julian indeed did forbid that christians should be instructed in the disciplines of the Gentiles; but, saith *Sozomen*, the writer of the ecclesiastical history, he did this because he thought, that by those disciplines, men might attain to a great faculty to persuade, which advantage he would not have the christians to gain, to the help of their religion*. Now certainly this was done, as *Socrates*, another writer of the ecclesiastical history, doth acknowledge, by the singular providence of God. For, seeing christians had begun to degenerate from the gospel, and to betake themselves to heathenish learning, *Julian* attributed all the glory and excellency of christianity to that learning, and so thought, with Mr *Simpson*, that if human learning were denied to christians, christianity itself would soon be at an end. Wherefore the Lord stirred up *Julian*, to put down the doctrine of the heathen in the schools of christians, that it might appear to all the world, "That as the true christian re-"ligion is not helped by human learning, so neither is "it hindered by the want of it:" And that there is more light, knowledge, truth, wisdom, power, and utterance, given to christians by the unction of the Spirit alone, which all receive who believe, than through all heathenish disciplines: And also, that it might be manifest, that true christianity is founded on faith in Christ, and the gift of his Spirit only, and not at all on human learning. For what human learning had *Peter* and *John?* and yet, in what wisdom and authority did they, being ignorant and unlearned men, reprove, convince, and silence the greatest and ablest men of the Jews? *Acts* iv. 13. And what human learning had *Stephen?* and yet he confuted the *Libertines*, and *Cyrenians*, and *Alexan-*

* Vetuit ne christiani Gentilium disciplinis instruerentur. *Sozomen. Histor. Eccles. cap.* 17.

drians, and all the philosophers of *Cicilia,* and *Asia,* which disputed with him; and *they all were not able to resist,* not the human learning, but *the wisdom and Spirit by which he spake;* Acts vi. 10. And Christ hath promised all his people, that when, for his name's sake, *they should be brought before kings and rulers,* who usually have the greatest accomplishments of human learning, that then they should not study beforehand what to say; for *he would give them, in that very hour, a mouth and wisdom, which none of their adversaries should be able to resist.* And the power and virtue of the gospel, and the wisdom, knowledge, and utterance of God's Spirit, is more gloriously manifest in plain men than in learned men; for in the one, the grace and virtues of the Spirit are attributed to human learning; but in the other, to God only, who dwells in them. Wherefore, that the wisdom and knowledge, and light, and power of the word of faith in true christians, might not be attributed to human learning, God stirred up an enemy to the christian religion, to be so serviceable to it, as to hinder heathenish doctrine from being taught in the schools of christians; that so the church might be restored to be as in the days of its youth, when there flourished in it only the simple and plain word of faith, without any intermingling of philosophy or human doctrine. And if *Constantine* had made such an order in his time, *Julian* had not had such an opportunity to have renounced christianity, and turned heathen. For *Julian* being instructed in the philosophy and disciplines of the heathen by *Libanius* his tutor, by this means, he came to love philosophy better than the gospel, and so by degrees, turned from christianity to heathenism. Which may be a fair warning to all christians, that they suffer not their children to be so educated, lest at last, with *Julian,* they (at least in their hearts) lothe and reject the gospel, and become with him, apostates and pagans.

And hence it is most evident, that heathenish philosophy is so far from being a profitable study for the children of christians, that it is very dangerous for them to be so educated, as *Socrates* is forced to confess; where he saith, "For christians to be thoroughly instructed in "the disciplines of the Gentiles, there is none will grant "that this is profitable to the christian religion: For it "is not without danger for christians to be taught in the "learning of the heathens, seeing this teacheth that there "are many gods. And therefore, saith he, the doctrine "of the heathen is not approved by Christ, or any of his "apostles or disciples*."

Wherefore, said *Luther*, "My counsel is, that a youth "should shun philosophy, and school-divinity, as the "death of his soul §."

3. ERROR.

That the knowledge of heavenly things cannot come to us but by things on earth: and that all divinity is swadled in human learning.

Answer. I conceive that all christians, at the first reading of this, will acknowledge that this doctrine is not divine, but philosophical.

The philosophers say, that nothing is in the understanding, but that which is first in the sense; which is proportionable to that which Mr *Simpson* speaks; and yet they know not what they say, when they say so. But let us consider if this be so: "That the knowledge of heavenly "things cannot come to us but by things on earth: then

* Christianos de integro gentilium disciplinam imbibere, nemo est qui christianæ religioni prodesse concesserit. Nam non est extra periculum christianos Gentilium eruditione instituti, quippe quæ docet multos esse Deos. *Socrates Histor. Eccles. cap.* 14.

§ Meum consilium est, ut adolescens vitet philosophiam ac theologiam scholasticam, ut mortem animæ suæ. *Luth. Tom.* 2. *fol.* 434. *b.*

how shall we know the mystery of God, even the father, and the mystery of Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh? Or how shall the mystery of faith, and of our union with Christ through faith, into one flesh and Spirit with him, be known? Or the new birth and new creature which hath all things new in it, and all those new things, the things of God? Or how shall the free justification of a sinner, through the death of Christ, and his reconciliation to God, be known? with all the rest of the things of the gospel? seeing nothing on earth can reveal the least part of these things? And if the world by wisdom, that is, its philosophy, knew not God, how can it, by that wisdom, reveal God and his things, which it never knew? Nay, the apostle doth clearly testify against this carnal and corrupt doctrine, in 1 *Cor.* ii. 7, 8, saying, *We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our Glory, which none of the princes of this world knew:* and by princes of this world, he means, not only worldly powers, as *Chrysostom* affirms, but also philosophers and orators, who often obtained the chief government among the nations. God hath wrapped up his gospel, saith *Paul*, into such hidden wisdom, that they are never able to search into it, or to discover the least part of it, seeing God contrived it all, and *appointed it before the world, unto our glory:* and all their knowledge is but from the world. Yea, he adds, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have ever entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:* In which words, God hath shut out the natural man for ever, with all his study, knowledge, abilities, and attainments, from having any right understanding of his kingdom, or the things of it: For *the eye of man hath not seen them at any time, nor his ear heard them, nor hath any knowledge*

of them entered into his heart: so far is this doctrine from truth, that the knowledge of heavenly things cannot come to us but by things on earth. But the apostle shews how the faithful came to know these high, holy, spiritual, and eternal things, which lie infinitely beyond the knowledge and discovery of all men, to wit, by the Spirit; saying, *But God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God;* ver. 10. So that the people of God know the things of the gospel, not by earthly things, as Mr *Simpson* affirms, nor by philosophy and outward wisdom, which only reaches to earthly things, but by the Spirit*.

Farther, If all divinity be swadled in human learning; then I do affirm, that all such divinity hath no great depth, seeing the bottom of human learning is easily fathomed.

But can any christian heart think, that all true divinity, which comprehends in it *the heighth, and breadth, and length, and depth of the love of God, which passeth knowledge, and all the unsearchable riches of Christ, and all the infinite and incomprehensible treasures of his wisdom, power, and righteousness, of his love, goodness, truth, faithfulness, and of all the fulness of the Godhead, wherewith he is filled,* can be contained and wrapped up in the narrow and scant bounds of human learning? How much truer doctrine had it been to have taught, that all true divinity is contained in God and his word, and that we can know nothing of God aright, but by his word, which holy men have spoken by the spirit, and believers do receive by faith; and out of this word, all the learning in the world doth not contain in itself, neither can it reveal to us aright, the least thing of God, or of his mind and will.

* Ου διὰ της ἔξαθεν σοφίας; ἀυτη γὰρ καθάπερ τις θεραπαίνις ητιμωμένη, ȣκ ἀφειθη ἔνδον εισελθειν ϗ παρακύψαι εις τὰ δεσποτικὰ μυςηρια. Chrysostom. in 1 Epist. ad Cor. Hom. 7.

But I conceive he might speak thus, that all divinity is wrapped up in human learning, to deter the common people from the study and enquiry after it, and to cause them still to expect all divinity from the clergy, who, by their education, have attained to that human learning, which the plain people are destitute of: For it is the old and new design of antichrist, to make the people depend on the clergy for all divinity, though the people have the scriptures as near them, and the grace of God usually nearer to them, than they; seeing *God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.*

Again, if all divinity be swadled in human learning, then must it sadly follow, that all who want human learning, must needs also want divinity; and then how shall poor plain people, who live in lawful callings, and have not the leisure to attain human learning, how shall they do to be saved? Or what help must they have to teach them divinity, who have not opportunity to gain human learning?

And yet farther, if all divinity be swadled in human learning; then Christ and his apostles had no true divinity; for they had no human learning to swadle it in, neither would have any: Shall we say now, according to Mr *Simpson's* doctrine, that they had no divinity? I do, with all boldness affirm, that this doctrine is contrary to the christian faith.

4. ERROR.

That *Paul* was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; and God took him so fitted, to wit, with human learning, and made him an able instrument in his church.

Answer. Not so, but God took *Paul*, not a good scholar, and so made him an able preacher; but he took him, as a blasphemer and persecutor, and as a cruel and enraged enemy against Christ and his truth, and people, and magnified the riches of his mercy in converting such

an one: and *Paul*, having *much forgiven him, loved much;* and through his great love, was the fitter to preach the gospel, according to that of Christ to *Peter; Peter, dost thou love me? feed my sheep.* Yea, *Paul* himself ascribes his painful and profitable preaching, not to his learning and education under *Gamaliel,* which was, or ought to have been, only in the law and prophets, as hath been proved, but to the free grace of God bestowed on him; saying, *I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God in me:* So that *Paul* became so excellent a preacher, not by his fitting through human learning, but through the grace of God.

And here I shall mind Mr *Simpson* of a passage which I have read in *Chrysostom,* which comes home to this matter in hand; it is in his third homily on the first epistle to the *Corinthians,* where he said, "That God "had no need, at the beginning of the gospel, of learned "men, and sophisters, to preach the gospel, and to con- "vince the world with syllogisms; but did only use the "word of faith, in the mouths of plain handicrafts-men, "and artificers: Wherefore, saith he, when the Greeks "shall accuse the disciples of Christ, as ignorant of let- "ters, and unlearned, let us ourselves, who are christians, "accuse them more. Neither let any one say, that *Paul* "was wise and learned; but let us say, their men were "wise and learned, but ours were rude and ignorant: "For in thus doing, according to the truth, we shall "have the greater advantage against them. For if *Paul* "was unlearned, and yet overcame learned *Plato,* his "victory was the greater, and the grace of God the more "glorious. Now this I say, saith he, because the other "day, I heard a certain christian discoursing ridiculous- "ly with a Greek; each of them in their discourse, pre- "judicing their own cause: For the Greek spake that "which the christian should have said; and the chris- "tian spake that which the Greek should have said. For

"the question between them being, touching *Paul* and "*Plato*. The Greek endeavoured to prove that *Paul* was "rude and unlearned; but the christian, through his sim- "plicity, did endeavour to prove, that *Paul* was more "learned and eloquent than *Plato*. And so, the Greek "would obtain the victory, if the christian's reason "should prevail. For if *Paul* were more learned than "*Plato*, then might men object, that he overcame not the "world through grace, but through eloquence. Where- "fore, that which the christian spake, made for the "Greek; and that which the Greek spake, made for the "christian. Wherefore, he saith, when the Greeks shall "say the apostles were rude, and unlearned, poor, mean, "simple, obscure persons; let us acknowledge it as the "truth: For this is not their reproach, but their glory; "that being such, they yet overcame the learned men, "the wise men, the philosophers, the rhetoricians, the "orators, the princes, and all the world, as if they had "not been men. For when any thing is done above the "state and power of nature, this doth exceedingly mani- "fest and magnify the grace of God*."

And so it appears, that *Chrysostom* was of another mind in this matter touching *Paul*, than Mr *Simpson*; and that *Paul* was of another mind touching himself.

Now seeing that Mr *Simpson* doth here insinuate that human learning fits a man to the ministry of the gospel: and seeing this also is the opinion of all the carnal and unbelieving people, I do desire them to consider, what some godly men have spoken clearly from the word of God in this matter.

* Ταῦτα δὲ εἶπον, ἐπειδὴ τινῶν ἠκουσά ποτε χρισιανοῦ πρὸς Ἕλληνα καταγελάσως σιαλεγομένου, καὶ ἀμφοτέρων ἐν τῃ πρὸς ἀλλήλους μάχῃ τὰ ἑαυτῶν καταλυόντων. ἃ γὰρ ἔδει τὸν χρισιανὸν εἰπεῖν ταῦτα ὁ Ἕλλην ἔλεγε, καὶ ἃ τὸν Ἕλληνα εἰκὸς ἦν εἰπεῖν, ταῦτα ὁ χρισιανὸς προεβάλλετο, &c.

Chrysostom, who knew the mystery of the gospel more clearly than any of the ancient writers, in his comment on the first epistle to the *Corinthians,* doth wholly exclude human learning from contributing any thing, either to the speaking or receiving the gospel. "For, saith he, "to believe in him that was crucified and buried, and to "be fully persuaded that he rose again, and sits at the "right hand of God, and hath all power in heaven and "earth given to him; and that he is made of God to the "whole church, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification "and redemption; this doctrine stands not in need of "human wisdom and reasonings, but of faith only; and "that both in them that speak it, and in them that re-"ceive it. For the apostles did not proceed in this mat-"ter in outward wisdom, but in faith; and so became "more wise and excellent than the worldly wise: and "so much the more, as it is a greater matter to receive "the things of God by faith, than to be persuaded into "them by the force of argument*."

He adds also, that, "To receiving the doctrine of the "gospel, neither is the wise man profited any thing by "his wisdom, neither is the plain man hindered any thing "by his ignorance; yea, if I may speak a wonderful "thing, saith he, ignorance is more fit and ready to re-"ceive the gospel, than wisdom. And a shepherd, and "a ploughman, will sooner receive the gospel, and sub-"mit to it, than a scholar, who lives in the strength of "human wisdom and reason†."

* Καὶ γὰρ οἱ Ἀπόστολοι οὐ σοφίᾳ προσηλθον, ἀλλὰ πίστει, καὶ γεγόνασι τῶν ἔξω σοφῶν σοφώτεροι, καὶ ὑψηλότεροι, καὶ τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον, ὅσῳ τὸ λογισμοὺς κινεῖν, τὸ πίστει τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ δέχεσθαι μεῖζον. Chrysost. in 1 Epist. ad Corinth. Hom. 4.

† Πρὸς γὰρ τὸ δέξασθαι τὸ κερύγμα τὸ εὐαγγελικὸν, οὔτε ὁ σοφὸς ὠφελεῖται, τι παρὰ τῆς σοφίας, οὔτε ὁ ἰδιώτης ἐβλάβη τι παρὰ τῆς ἀμαθείας, &c. Idem ibid.

He farther saith there, "that where the wisdom of "God is, as it is in the gospel, there is no need of man's "wisdom; as where the sun is, there is no need of a "candle*."

And he concludes this matter thus; "The preaching "of the gospel is a heavenly thing; and human wisdom "and learning cannot help herein, but rather hinder. "And therefore when Christ sent forth the first teachers "of the gospel, he took not wise and learned philoso- "phers, that the cross of Christ might not be made void, "and that the faith of christians should not stand in the "wisdom of man, but in the power of God: But he "chose plain fishermen, tent-makers, publicans, obscure, "simple, poor, contemptible, ignorant and unlearned "men; and these overcame kings, princes, people, na- "tions, Greeks, philosophers, orators, sophisters; they "overcame the ancient manners, customs, and the very "religion of the world; also their laws, judgments, di- "vers sorts of punishments, and innumerable kinds of "deaths; and by all this, saith he, it was manifest, that "their preaching was not in human wisdom, but in the "grace of God†."

And thus doth *Chrysostom* affirm, and prove that human learning doth not fit men to the ministry of the gospel, but is rather a hindrance thereunto; and that the grace of God only fits them for this heavenly work.

Hear also what *Wickliff* saith to this matter, in his book intitled, The path-way to perfect knowledge; where he sheweth, that it is not human learning that helps to understand the scriptures, and to profit in the study of them, but something more high and heavenly: his own words are these: "He whose heart is full of "love, comprehendeth without any error, the manifold

* Ὅπου σοφία Θεοῦ, οὐκέτι χρεία ἀνθρωπίνης. Chrysost.

† Ὅθεν δῆλον ὅτι οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρωπίνῃ τὸ κήρυγμα γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ Θεοῦ χάριτι.

"abundance, and largest teaching of God's scripture: "For *Paul* saith, *the fulness of the law is charity;* and "in another place, *the end of the law is charity, of a clean "heart, and good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:* And "Christ saith, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy "mind, and thy neighbour as thyself: For on these two "commandments hang all the law and the prophets:* And, "as the root of all evil is covetousness, so the root of all "good is love."

"Charity, by which we love God, and our neighbour, "holdeth surely all the greatness and largeness of God's "speeches. Therefore, if we have not leisure to search "all the holy scriptures, and to pierce into all the privi- "ties of them; hold thou love, whereon all things hang, "and so shalt thou hold that which thou learnest there, "and also that which thou learnest not. For if thou "know charity, thou knowest something, whereon also "that hangeth which thou knowest not. And in that "that thou understandest in scripture, love is open; and "in that that thou understandest not, love is hid. There- "fore, he that holdeth love in virtues of good life, hold- "eth both that which is open, and that which is hid in "God's word."

And after speaking to the clergy, he saith, "There- "fore, worldly, fools, do ye first repent of your sins, and "forsake pride and covetousness, and be ye meek, and "fear ye God in all things, and love your neighbour as "yourselves, and then shall ye profit in the study of holy "writ. And this is a far better way to understand the "scriptures, than by human learning."

And after, speaking of the abominations of the university of *Oxford*, he saith thus, "The fourth abomina- "tion, is, that it is now proposed to hinder christian men "from learning freely God's law, till they have spent "nine or ten years at art, or philosophy, which compre-

" hendeth many strong errors of heathen men, against " the christian belief. It seemeth well that God will " not cease from vengeance, till it and other things be " punished sore. For it seemeth that worldly clerks, and " feignedly religious, do this under pretence, that simple " men of wit and knowledge, know not God's law, to " preach it generally against sins in the realm. But wit " ye, worldly clerks, and feignedly religious, that God " both can, and may, if it liketh him, speed simple men, " out of the university, as much to know the holy scrip- " tures, as masters in the university. Wherefore, he saith, " it is no great matter, though men of good will, be not " poisoned with heathen men's error nine or ten years " together: But let them live well, and study the holy " scriptures, and preach truly and freely against open " sins till death." Thus he. Whereby he declares that the scriptures are not to be understood by human learning, but by faith and love: And that human learning doth not prepare men to the knowledge of the word, but rather corrupt them with heathen men's errors.

Tindal also, that apostle of *England*, as *Fox* calleth him, and blessed martyr, speaks thus to this matter; " They will say yet more shamefully (meaning the cler- " gy) that no man can understand the scriptures without " *philautia*, that is to say, philosophy: A man must first " be well seen in *Aristotle*, ere he can understand the " scripture, say they. Now, saith he, *Aristotle's* doc- " trine is, that the world was without beginning, and shall " be without end, and that the first man never was, and " the last never shall be: And that God doth all of ne- " cessity, neither careth he what we do. Without this " doctrine, saith he, ironically, how could we under- " stand the scripture, that saith, *God created the world* " *of nought, and God worketh all things of his free will,* " *and for a secret purpose; and that we shall rise again;*

" *and God will have accounts of all that we have done in* " *this life!*"

Aristotle saith, " Give a man a law, and he hath power " of himself to do or fulfil the law, and becometh righte- " ous with working righteously." But *Paul* and the scripture saith, That the law doth but utter sin only, and helpeth not; neither hath any man power to do the law, till the Spirit of God be given him through faith in Christ. Is it not a madness then to say that we could not understand the scripture without *Aristotle?* Moreover, *Aristotle's* felicity and blessedness standeth in avoiding all tribulations, and in riches, health, honour, worship, friends, and authority, which felicity pleaseth our spirituality well. Now without these, and a thousand such like points, couldst thou not understand scripture, which saith, that *righteousness cometh by Christ and not of man's will?* And that virtues are the fruits and gifts of God's Spirit, and that *Christ blesseth us in tribulations, persecution and adversity.* How, I say, couldst thou understand the scriptures without philosophy, inasmuch as *Paul*, Col. ii. warned them to beware lest any man spoil them, that is to say, rob them of their faith in Christ, *through philosophy and deceitful vanities, and through the traditions of men, and ordinances after the world, and not after Christ?*—And after;—But now, ye drive them from God's word, and will let no man come thereto, until he have been two years master of art. First they nuzzle them in sophistry, *& in bene fundatum;* and there corrupt they their judgments with apparent arguments, and with alledging to them texts of logic, of natural philosophy, of metaphysic, and moral philosophy, and of all manner of books of *Aristotle*, and of all manner of doctors, which yet they never saw," &c.

Again, *Huldricus Zuinglius* speaks thus to this matter: " We must needs be taught of God, and not of men, " to wit, in the knowledge of the gospel; for this is the

" saying of the eternal truth, *which knows not how to lie,*
" John vi. But and if you do not firmly believe that you
" may be taught of God, human doctrines being utterly
" rejected, ye are yet destitute of true faith. Neither have
" I myself devised this thing; *Hilary* also is of this
" opinion; but there is no need of his Testimony, when
" we hear that both Christ, and all the apostles were of
" the same mind. And here the whole use of school-di-
" vinity falls to the ground, and whatsoever is drawn out
" of the philosophers. For all these things do lean on hu-
" man reasons, which when they have once possessed a
" man's mind, he then thinks that the heavenly doctrine is
" wholly to be directed and framed according to the rule
" of human learning, which he judges to be most firm
" and infallible. Which thing they sufficiently discover
" in their words, saying, ubi cessat philosophus, illi
" cincipit theologus, " where the philosopher ceases,
" there the divine begins;" whereby they signify thus
" much, that he is able to judge most rightly in divine
" things, who comes most furnished with human learn-
" ing. As if so be the light of our will were more excel-
" lent, and more perspicuous than the divine glory:
" when yet we hear Christ saying, *I receive not glory of*
" *men; but I know you, that you have not the love of*
" *God in you,* John v. For they who have the love of
" God, cleave to no word so constantly, as to the word
" of God; seeing this is the light that enlightens every
" man that comes into the world. But no man is able to
" prove that philosophy is such a light. For which of
" the philosophers instructed the apostles? those simple,
" and in the judgment of the world, those foolish men,
" unskilful, and unlearned fishermen, were elected and
" instituted of God, and then were sent forth to preach,
" that they might become the masters and teachers of
" the whole world: to wit, that God, according to the
" saying of *Paul, might make ashamed all the strength*

" *of the world, and all the wisdom of the world**." Thus " he.

Luther also saith, " It is an error to say, that a man " cannot be a divine, but through *Aristotle*; nay, saith " he, a man cannot be a divine, except he become one " without *Aristotle*." And again, " A man becomes a " divine by living, yea by dying, and by being damned, " to wit, in his own sense, not by studying, reading, or " speculating." And again, " In holy things we must " not dispute or play the philosophers; but in divinity " we must only hear and believe, and resolve in our " heart that God is true, though the things he speaks in " his word, seem never so absurd to reason." And " again, " We shall then do well, if we, leaving logick " or philosophy in their own sphere, do learn to speak " with new tongues in the kingdom of faith, without " all sphere. For the affection of faith is to be exercis- " ed in the kingdom of faith, and not a philosophical un- " derstanding†."

And thus these godly men held forth, and proved from the word, that human learning is rather a hindrance than a help to the ministry of the gospel, and doth rather unfit than fit men for it: and that the grace and teaching of God only, prepares and enables men to this divine work, and no human thing at all.

Wherefore let all true christians be advised, that human

* *Zuingl. libr. de certitudine & veritate ver. Dei.* Quod si non firmiter creditis, vos, humanis doctrinis desertis, divinitus doceri posse, vera fide etiamnum vacui estis. Cadit hic theologiæ scholasticæ usus universus, & quicquid ex philosophis haustum est.

† Error est dicere, sine *Aristotele* non fit theologus; imo theologus non fit nisi id fiat sine *Aristotele*. *Tom* 1. *fol.* 10. Vivendo, imo moriendo & damnando fit theologus, non intelligendo, legendo aut speculando. *Luth. tom.* 2. *fol.* 57. In sacris rebus non est, disputandum aut philosophandum: in theologia tantum est audiendum & credendum, & statuendum in corde, Deus est verax, &c. Rectius fecerimus si dialectica seu philosophia in sua sphæra relictis, discamus loqui novis linguis in regno fidei, extra omnem sphæram. Affectus fidei exercendus est in articulis fidei, non intellectus philosophicus. *Luther.*

learning is so far from fitting men for the gospel, and the ministry thereof, as is suggested, that indeed there is nothing in greater enmity to Christ crucified, nor more contrary to the word of the cross, than that; yea, nothing in all the world hath been such an introducer, favourer, supporter, and inlarger of antichrist's kingdom, as human reason, learning, and philosophy; this hath brought in all the hypocracy, superstition, false doctrine, false worship, sects, schisms, divisions, which have at any time prevailed in the church, during all the reign of antichrist: and the gospel of Christ, and the true belief and practice of it, hath not had, at any time, a greater and more subtil, and plausible enemy than this. Yea farther, the gross ignorance and blindness of the rude world, hath not so perverted and falsified the word of the gospel, nor rendered it such contradiction and resistance, nor hath it brought such annoyance to the faithful, who have received and confessed it, as human science hath done; for this hath enabled men stoutly to oppose the truth, and subtilly to defend error as the truth; this hath made men bold and cunning to suppress God's mind from the world, and to hold forth their own mind to them, as if it were God's, under the pretence of the outward letter of the word; and a multitude of other evils have sprung from this corrupt fountain. Wherefore the apostle *Paul* is so far from encouraging christians to betake themselves to human learning to fit them for the gospel, that he, by the spirit, utterly forbids christians heathenish philosophy, lest they should be spoiled through the vanity of it, and be led away from Christ. And thus, in this matter, hath Mr *Simpson* manifestly departed from the doctrine of the scriptures, and of faithful men who have spoken from it.

5. ERROR.

That mens hatred to God doth as well appear in their hatred to human learning, as if they hated the scriptures.

Answer. I conceive Mr *Simpson's* heart was hot within him, out of his great zeal to human learning, the great goddess by which the university lives, when he thus spake; and it appears, he is very tender of the reputation and glory of it, who thus vindicates it, at as high a rate as the scriptures. But sir, do you know no more difference between the most precious word of our eternal Lord God, and his Son Jesus Christ; and the foolish, corrupt, and stinking doctrine of men? is there no more difference in your divinity, between the word of righteousness, life, and salvation, which God hath spoken by Christ, and Christ by his servants; and the word and doctrines of wretched men, full of sin, death, and destruction? and if the law itself, given by the ministration of angels, loseth its glory before the gospel, as the apostle testifies; how much more doth heathenish philosophy, brought forth, partly from the corrupt reason of man, and partly from the inspiration of the devil, become loathsome and abominable before it, for ever! and cannot we be enemies to this, say you, without hating the blessed word of God? nay, the blessed word of God, where it prevails in truth, doth make men to hate this, and to count it loss, and dung, and filth, and the most loathsome baseness in the world, in comparison of itself. Wherefore, through the grace of Christ, we will so love the scriptures, which are divine learning, as to hate human and heathenish learning for their sakes, seeing it hath put a veil of darkness in the church, over this glorious sun, the word of faith.

6. ERROR.

That if the spirit teach without means, men may as well be without the ordinances, as without the universities and human learning.

Answer. We do not say, that the spirit usually teacheth without means in the church of Christ; but we say, he teacheth by means of his own appointing; and how will

Mr *Simpson* prove, by any scripture, that universities and human learning are means which the Spirit of God useth to teach his church by? Where did ever the Lord speak one word, that he would use the disciplines of the Gentiles, as means whereby to teach men to know the mystery of Christ? Wherefore this is strange doctrine, that arts and sciences are the means whereby the Spirit teacheth the church: For sure I am, the Lord never taught his church, either of the Old, or of the New Testament, by these means. Only antichrist hath taught his church after this manner, and hath set up human learning as an ordinance of God, yea, as an ordinance of the New Testament to learn Christ by; that christians might be trained up to know Christ the wisdom of God, by human learning, the wisdom of the world, which is in direct enmity to God.

The chief ordinances whereby God helps his church, are the word of faith, and the prayer of faith; and by the ministration of the Spirit, he begins and carries on the salvation of his spiritual people: And these ordinances, the true church cannot want, neither doth God do any thing in his church without them. But the spiritual church, for ought that I could ever yet read in the word, may well want their divine ordinance of human learning, and yet not want any ordinance of God, that he hath appointed and sanctified for the use of his true church.

7. ERROR.

That men now, are not to receive the Spirit, in that immediate way to understand the Scriptures, in which it was given to them who wrote the scriptures.

Answer. Surely Mr *Simpson* will not deny, that the Spirit is given to that whole church which is the body of Christ; seeing *Paul* saith, *If any man have not Christ's Spirit, he is none of his*, he is no member of his. Now the Spirit is always given to whomsoever it is given, by the Father and the Son, as Christ taught his disciples.

promising them that *the Father would send the Spirit to them in his name;* and also that he himself *would send it to them from the Father.* And was this promise only made to them, and not to all the faithful also, who should believe in Christ, through their word? Doth not *Paul* say, *Rom.* xii. 13. of the whole church, that *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and are all made to drink into one Spirit?* He saith also to the *Galatians,* chap. iv. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.* And thus it is manifest, that the whole church of believers, and every true member thereof, do receive the Spirit of God. And do they not receive it alike immediately from God? Who can give the Spirit of God to man, but God himself? When God promised to pour out his Spirit, in the last days, upon all flesh, did he name any difference in the pouring of it out, saying, some shall receive it immediately, and some mediately? No, but all that are counted worthy to receive the Spirit of God, do receive it alike immediately from him; neither hath Christ left any lieutenant or deputy in the world, to give his Spirit to men in his absence: But he himself is always present in his true church, to the end of the world, both to teach them, and to give them his Spirit. He is too much in the darkness of antichrist, that denies this.

It is manifest then, that all the true church do alike receive the Spirit of God; and that they all receive it alike immediately from God, seeing no man nor angel can give the Spirit of God, but God himself gives his own Spirit to whom he pleases; by his own word, which he himself ministers by his own Spirit; and by this Spirit did holy men speak the scripture; and by this Spirit only, do holy men of God understand the scripture, as *Paul* saith, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of*

God; among which, his word hath a chief place: and after saith, that *by the Spirit they had the mind of Christ,* which others want, who yet have the same letter of the word, and are destitute of the Spirit. And so as the faithful spake the word by the Spirit of faith, so, through the same Spirit of faith only, so given, do the faithful understand it.

And though this thing be clear in itself, yet I judge it convenient to add here the testimonies of *Luther* and *Calvin* in this matter. *Luther* saith, "The scriptures are "not to be understood, but by that very Spirit by which "they were written; which Spirit can be no where found "more readily and effectually, than in those holy letters "of his, which he hath written.

And *Calvin* saith, "The same Spirit that spake by "the mouth of the prophets, it is necessary that that "should pierce into our hearts, to persuade us, that they "faithfully delivered that which was committed to them "of God; so that we must necessarily have the same "Spirit, to know his mind, that they had to utter his "mind*." Wherefore it is evident, that Mr *Simpson* is not orthodox in this point neither.

8. ERROR.

That men now are to get knowledge, to wit, of the scripture, by studies, and human learning, and not by inspiration.

Answer. This doctrine carries the visible mark of antichrist upon it; for it is only the inspiration of God that enables a man to know the things of God, and not a man's study or human learning: It is not in this case, *in him that wills and runs, but in God that shews mercy.* Where-

* Scripturæ non nisi eo Spiritu intelligendæ sunt, quo scriptæ sunt: qui Spiritus nusquam præsentius et vivacius quam in ipsis sacris suis quas scripsit literis, inveniri potest. *Luth. tom.* 2. *fol.* 309. *a.*

Idem Spiritus qui per os prophetarum locutus est, in corda nostra penetret necesse est: ut persuadeat fideliter protulisse quod divinitus erat mandatum. *Calo. Institut. lib.* 1. *cap.* 8. §. 4.

fore Christ hath said, *No man knows the Son, but the Father, and he to whomsoever the Father will reveal him.* Wherefore *Paul* prays for the *Ephesians, that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ:* without which Spirit of revelation, Christ and the Father can never be known. What can human learning, and the studies of men, find out of the mystery of Christ, which was hidden from ages and generations, as *Paul* testifies, till the Spirit revealed it? Yea, Christ hath taught, *that God hides these things of the gospel from the wise and prudent,* that is, the studying and learned men, and reveals them to babes; and that this is his good pleasure so to do. And so no man can know Christ and his gospel, and what is the faith, hope, and love of the gospel, but by the most present teaching and revelation of God himself, by his Spirit. Wherefore to deny the inspiration of God's Spirit now, and to ascribe all knowledge of the word of God to mens studies, and to human learning, is the most gross and palpable doctrine of antichrist and his prophets; whereas, all the people of God are taught of God himself, in all the things of God, as Christ hath said; because no man, by his own studies and pains, can attain thereunto.

And in this matter, I shall also add the testimonies of *Luther* and *Latimer*. *Luther* saith, "No man sees one "jot or tittle in the scriptures, but he that hath the Spi- "rit of God: For all men have a darkened heart, in "such sort, that if they could speak, and knew how to "bring forth all things of the scripture, yet have they "not any true sense, or right knowledge of them. For, "saith he, the Spirit is required to the understanding of "the whole scripture, and of every part thereof*."

* Nullus homo unum iota in scripturis videt, nisi qui Spiritum Dei habet: omnes habent obscuratum cor, ita ut si etiam dicant & norint proferre omnia scripturæ, nihil tamen horum sentiant aut vere cognoscant, &c. Spiritus enim requiritur ad totam scripturam & quamlibet ejus partem intelligendom. *Luth. tom.* 3. *fol.* 169. *a.*

And *Latimer* saith, "The carnal and philosophical "understanding of the scriptures, is not that wisdom of "God which is hid from the wise, and revealed to little "ones*."

9. ERROR.

That human learning is as the out-works to the fort of the gospel, and as the outer court to the tempel of the gospel; and so, if you will keep the fort well, you must keep the out-works strong; and if you will preserve the inner, you must look to the outer court.

Answer. How highly hath Mr *Simpson* honoured *Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato* and *Aristotle*, &c. to make them a strong guard for the person of Christ! And how highly hath he honoured their learning, to make it a defence for the gospel! And how weak and feeble hath he sought to render the word of faith, that must be thus defended by the arts and disciplines of men, as not being able to stand alone, and defend itself? Doth this man truly believe in the Son of the living God, who makes him such an helpless idol? or doth he believe the word of the gospel, which hath given eyes to the blind, and ears to the deaf, and feet to the lame; which hath raised the dead, and cast out devils, and commanded the winds and waves, and they have obeyed? I say, doth he believe this word to be of God, which hath done the very works of God, and yet openly affirms to the world, that it cannot maintain itself, or subsist without the help of philosophy? Is that word, which mightily and perfectly saves all the elect, and that in dispight of the world and the devil, and the gates of hell, not able to save itself without human help? Must that word be secured by *Aristotle*, which delivers all the elect from sin, death, and hell for ever? Are grammar, rhetoric, logic, ethics,

* Carnalis & philosophica scripturarum intelligentia non est sapientia Dei quæ a sapientibus absconditur, parvulis revelatur. *Latimer in his answer to Sir Edward Baintan's letter.*

physics, metaphysics, mathematics, the weapons whereby we must defend the gospel? Is Mr *Simpson* so ill a proficient in christianity, that he hath not read, or doth not remember that of *Paul, Ephes.* vi. 12. where he saith, *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.

Here now are the true christian's weapons, whereby he defends himself through the word, and defends the word against all the world.

And the same *Paul*, in 2 *Cor.* x. 3. saith,

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds:

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ:

And having in readiness to revenge all disobedience.

So that the faithful do not defend the gospel by philosophy, as is heathenishly suggested; but by the gospel,

they defend the gospel: and the gospel hath, in itself, that wisdom, righteousness, strength, and those virtues which are infinitely able to defend itself against all the world, and against all the powers of darkness. And how contrary is this doctrine to Mr *Simpson's?* And thus much for his out-works to the gospel.

Now for his outer court to the gospel: I know no other outer court the gospel ever had, than the law of *Moses*, which law was the preparation to the gospel, and the school-master to bring us unto Christ, which human learning never was: but human learning is the outer court to antichrist's temple, it is the school-master to bring men to antichrist. And thus would Mr *Simpson* also turn the law out of its place, and set up human learning in the stead of the law, and so would make void both law and gospel for human learning's sake: Surely, one would think he hath some considerable advantage thereby, that he thus fences for it.

10. ERROR.

But what is the bottom, saith he, of all this, that is, of some mens appearing against human learning, as the unction of the ministry, and against the universities, as the fountain of the ministry, but this, that some say, they are one with Christ; and as Christ hath the divine nature in him, so every believer also hath: and he that hath God in him, need not go to any man to learn? whereas, *John* xvii. Christ speaketh of believers as at an infinite distance from himself; he their lord, they his servants. He in glory, they in the world. And if they be so united to Christ, then it will follow, that Christ is not the only begotten son of God; and that Christ and we should be equal, and he not our Lord, &c.

Answer. Now doth not all this declare a most woeful ignorance of, and enmity to the gospel of God our Saviour? for is our union with Christ the foundation of error? or have true believers no real union with Christ,

but imaginary? do not the saints partake of the divine nature? doth not *Peter* expressly affirm it, 2 *Pet*, i. iv. where he saith, *exceeding great and precious promises are made to us, that we thereby should be made partakers of the divine nature!* and what is the divine nature, but the very nature of God? see *Luther* on the place.

Again, are believers, as he affirms, at an infinite distance from Christ? if this were true, what sad news would it be to the church of God? How can this doctrine agree with these scriptures? that *Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;* and, *Christ in you the hope of glory;* and, *of him are ye in Christ Jesus:* Again, saith Christ, *I am the true vine, and ye are the branches:* and so, as the vine is in the branches, and the branches are in the vine, so is Christ in christians, and so are christians in Christ. Again, *John* xiv. 20. *At that day ye shall know,* saith Christ himself, that you need not doubt of the doctrine, that *I am in my father, and you in me, and I in you:* And again, *John* xvii. 21. saith Christ, *I pray not for these alone;* that is, who now believe; *but also for all that shall hereafter believe in me, through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, father, art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one, as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* Here now is no infinite distance between Christ and believers, but a wonderful and admirable nearness and oneness: which the learned ignorance of philosophy understands not, nor the ignorant knowledge of any carnal christian.

But sure, this word of God is true, and the saints receive it in faith, and will not be deluded with any philosophical, sophistical, or antichristian glosses or false teachers.

And thus doth the holy word of God affirm plainly enough, that Christ and his christians are most nearly

united; and yet doth not this union make an equality, and rob Christ of his due glory, seeing Christ is the head, and they his members; Christ the first born, and they his brethren. And so as Christ hath the pre-eminence in all things above them all, as becomes the head and first-born, so they have communion with him in all things, as becomes his members and brethren.

And whereas he jests, and saith, he that hath God in him, needs not go to man to learn; I do affirm this is true enough, and the scripture hath affirmed it in several places: *Isaiah* saith to the spiritual church, *all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*, and Christ saith, it is written, *they shall be all taught of God: he therefore that heard and learned of my father, cometh to me.* And *John* saith, 1 *John* ii. 27. *The anointing which ye have received from him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie.* And this doctrine is so manifest from the scriptures, that he is of antichrist that denies it: for God inwardly teaches all his people himself, by his Spirit: and they so hear the word, by the ministry of man, that it is always God that teaches them, and not man.

11. ERROR.

Arts and tongues are the cups in which God drinks to us.

Answer. In what a sad condition then are the common and plain people, that they cannot pledge him? But only the learned clergy keep these cups to themselves, as heretofore they kept the cup in the sacrament.

But what strange phrase is this? savouring of the ranters religion; as if God was the familiar companion of the clergy, and sometimes drank to them in a cup of hebrew, sometimes in a cup of greek, and sometimes in a cup of latin; and as if sometimes he drank to them in a cup of logic, and sometimes in a cup of ethics, sometimes

in a cup of metaphysics? Is not this truly, profana vocum novitas, a prophane newness of speech, never before heard of to my knowledge in the church of God, and which the apostle utterly condemns?

12. ERROR.

We shall never keep up religion, if we do not keep up learning: but when learning goes down, religion goes down too.

Answer. The church is founded on Christ, and Christ and his church, it seems, are both founded on human learning. It is no wonder now, that Mr *Simpson* lays so great stress on it every where! And that men of his religion, term the university, fundamentum ecclesiæ, the foundation of the church. And if human learning do indeed uphold all christian religion, let all men and magistrates come forth and uphold it in the name of God. But surely, the religion of the gospel depends wholly on Christ, as Christ on God: and there is no need of human learning to support this, except God and Christ are insufficient. We have a sure word and doctrine of the gospel, that remains firm for ever, and inviolable, and unconquerable, in and through Christ, and his Spirit, and the father; and all the world shall shatter in pieces, and human learning go down to hell, and this shall stand fast for ever: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, and not one jot or tittle of my word*, saith Christ.

Believers know, that not one point of their religion depends on human learning; but all on Christ himself, who is the true and living word. Wherefore these are the fears of antichrist and his prophets, that their religion will go down with human learning, because it was set up by it: But the true religion of the Gospel of God our Saviour, was at first set up without it, and hath hitherto remained without it, and will abide so for ever. And to this the Spirit and the Bride give witness.

13. ERROR.

Seeing religious foundations are so ancient, then keep them up: Your destruction will never be, but from yourselves.

Answer. Religious foundations! What religion founded the universities is well known. For by the counsel of four monks, the scholars of *Bede*, to wit, *Rabanus*, *Albinus*, *Claudius*, and *John Scotus*, the university which had been translated from *Athens* to *Rome*, was translated by *Charles* the great, from *Rome* to *Paris*, *Anno*. 791. And for our English universities of *Cambridge* and *Oxford;* Thus it is recorded; "That the "study of *Cambridge* was instituted, *Anno* 630. by *Si-*"*gisbert* king of the *East Angles*, who after changed "his purple or kingly robes, for a fryar's coul or hood. "And the lectures here were begun by four monks, of "which brother or fryar *Ode*, as they termed him, read "grammar, according to *Priscian's* doctrine: *Terricus*, "an acute sophister, read *Aristotle's* logic, according to "the Institutions of *Porphyrius*, and *Averroes;* brother "or fryar *William*, read *Tully's* rhetoric; and *Gisle-*"*bertus*, read divinity to them on sundays, and saints "days*."

And for *Oxford*, "that was founded by king *Alfred*, "*Anno* 895 by the persuasion of *Neotus* the monk; and "rewards were propounded for those that would profess "learning there. Afterwards, both these schools were "made universities, in *Edward* the first's time, by the "court of *Rome*, as *Robert Remington* affirms†."

* Studium Cantabrigiense institutum noscitur, *Anno* 630. a Sigisberto Anglorum Orientalium Rege, qui postea purpuram in cucullum commutavit. *Arnoldus Wion Duacensis, Benedictinus. lib. 5. cap.* 94.

† Anno 895 rex *Alfredus* hortante *Neoto* monacho viro doctissimo, *Oxonii* publicam academiam instituit, propositis professoribus literarum præmiis. *Georg Lillius in Chron. Britan.* Regnante *Edwardo* primo, [illegible] studio *Grantebrig*, facta est universitas, sicut est *Oxonium*, per curiam *Romanum*. *Robert Remington.*

Yea farther, by the very names of the colleges, it is manifest, what religion set them up; some being founded in the honour of one saint, some of another saint; one being founded in the honour of Christ, another in the honour of Jesus, another in the honour of Immanuel, another in the honour of the Trinity; whereby they have rent the name of God in pieces, each one seeking to honour that name of Christ most, in the honour of which his college was founded; yea, some colleges have been founded in the honour of Christ's body; as the colleges of *Corpus Christi*, in both universities: and one in *Oxford*, for the help of all dead souls, and for their rescue out of purgatory: And so it is well known what religion founded them. And what religion will, in due time, destroy these foundations, if they be not reformed, is as well known.

For *Wickliff*, whom God raised up to be one of the most eminent reformers of the christian religion, since the apostles times, speaks thus, touching universities, colleges and students. "Seeing Christ, saith he, hath "not ordained these universities, or colleges, it is mani- "fest, that both they, and the graduations in them, are "nothing but so much vain heathenism introduced; in "testimony whereof, as well the collegiates, as other "graduates, do seek the things which are their own, "leaving the rules of charity: From whence do arise "envies, and comparisons between persons and coun- "tries, and many other seed-plots of the father of lies*."

Again, he having spoken of other sects, saith, "Our "judgment concerning colleges is the same, as touching

* Quia enim Christus non ordinavit istas universitates, sive collegia, manifestum videtur, quod ista, sicut graduationes in illis, sunt vana Gentilitas introducta, in cujus signum tam collegiati quam & alii graduati, querunt quæ sua sunt, charitatis regulas deferentes: ex que pululant invidiæ, comparationes personarum & patriæ, & multa alia seminaria patris mendacii. *Wickliff in speculo militantis ecclesiæ. cap.* 26.

" their general studies : For through them, persons and " countries are accepted against the rules of charity, and " inward envies are heaped up, with other sins, perjuries, " and simonies, against their own statutes. Notwith- " standing, it is granted, that out of such collegs, many " good things do arise, as well as out of other sects ; yet " not so many, as by the occasion of the sin of the de- " vil, and the sin of the first man. And therefore let a " faithful man be ashamed to alledge the fruit of such " profit*."

Again, saith he, " If these colleges are, in their con- " versation, rejected of the Lord, who doubt but that, to " nourish them in this way, is no alms, but the foolish " presumption of a faction and party against Christ? " For all these sects, and all newnesses which are not " founded on Christ the Lord, they tempt Christ with " the devil, *Matt.* iv. seeing they despise the free ordina- " tion of his sect, and do rather choose another servile " sect, less good; as if they would not ascend into the " heavenly Sion by the steps which God hath ordained, " but would fly to the pinnacle of the temple by the car- " rying of the devil. What alms therefore is this, to " cherish such a child of the devil, in Cain's castles, " against Christ† ?"

* Quantum ad collegia in studiis suis generalibus est idem judicium. Nam per ipsa, patriæ & personæ, cont a charitatis regulas acceptantur, et intrinsecæ invidiæ, cum peccatis aliis et perjuriis ac simoniis contra instituta propria cumulantur. Conceditur tamen, quod ex talibus collegiis, sicut ex aliis sectis, eveniunt multa bona, non tamen tot, quot occasione peccati diaboli, et peccati primi hominis. Ideo erubescat fidelis, fructum talis commodi allegare. *Wickliff lib. de cura pastorali, cap.* 10.

† Si collegia ista sunt in conversatione a Domino reprobata, quis dubitat quin sic nutrire eos non foret eleemosyna, sed factionia et partis contra Christum stulta presumptio. Omnes hæ sectæ et omnes novitates, quæ non in Christo Domino fundatæ sunt, tentant Christum cum Satana, *Matt.* iv. cum spernunt ordinationem liberam sectæ ejus, & præeligunt servilem sectam, aliam, minus bonam ; ac si nollent per gradus quos Deus ordinat, in Sion cœlestem ascendere, sed per lationem Satanæ ad templi pinnacula transvolvere. Quæ ergo eleemosyna est, sic fovere puerulum talem diaboli in castris Cainiticis contra Christum? *Idem.*

He also affirms, "that one ideot, through the help of "the grace of God, doth more good in the church, than "many graduates in the schools and colleges: and, that "God's inspiration of such, doth more profit the commu- "nity of the faithful, than all the universities, and all "their studies and privileges."

Thus hath *Wickliff* witnessed in this matter, who was also himself master of *Baliol College* in *Oxford:* And *Philip Melancthon* gives this testimony of him, *Equidem sapientem virum judico fuisse Wicklefum Anglum, qui omnium primus, quod ego sciam, vidit universitates fuisse Satanæ synagogas;* that is, "I do indeed judge "*Wickliff* of *England* to have been a wise man, who, "for ought I know, first of all, saw universities to have "been the synagogues of Satan."

John Hus also, that excellent instrument of Jesus Christ, and blessed martyr, saith, speaking on that scripture, *Isaiah* xxviii. "*Wo to the crown of the pride of* "*Ephraim, and the crown of pride shall be troden un-* "*der foot*, saith, The doctorships and masterships of "many, who, having the word of God wholly choked "in them, do now too shamefully make broad their phi- "lacteries, and inlarge the borders of their garments, and "love the chief chairs in the schools, and to be saluted "in the markets, and to be called of men, doctor; and "by this they go in the apparel and harness of the mys- "tical body of antichrist, because it is written, that he "is the king of all the children of pride. And the "crown of pride, of these children of pride, shall be "trodden down*."

* Pedibus conculcabitur corona superbiæ. Nam multorum doctoratus et magistratus, qui suffocato in ipsis prorsus verbo evangelii, jam in verecunde nimis magnificant embrias & dilatant phylacteria sua, & amant primas cathedras in scholis & saluta i in foro, vocari ab hominibus rabbi; ac per hoc cedunt in apparatu & armamento corporis mystici antichristi, quoniam scriptum est, est rex super omnes filios superbiæ. *Joh. Hus. lib. de regno antichristi, cap.* 14.

And thus, as it is manifest, what religion founded the universities; so it is as manifest what religion will, in the appointed time, destroy these foundations, if they be not truly and thoroughly reformed. For surely as they are, if the work of Christ go forward in the world, as it necessarily must do, notwithstanding the present defection, in the appointed time, they can no more be held up, than the house built on the sand, in the time of tempest. For the true spiritual "church is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;" and so it is firmly founded upon a rock, and can never fall. But the universities are built on the philosophers and heathens, *Plato* and *Aristotle* being the chief corner stones; and so they are built upon the sand. And neither can their own hands uphold them, nor the secular arm establish them, in that day, wherein *the Lord alone shall be exalted.* But it is not men of moral and civil religion and righteousness, who will do this work, and execute this vengeance; for the inchantments of the universities are too strong and mighty for all human spirits; but the called, chosen, and faithful ones of Christ, when he shall summon them, and call them to his foot, they shall not stand on compliments, formalities, and niceties; nor regard friendship or enmity; but through the power of faith, shall break through all that can be said and objected by the wisdom, policy, prudence, and religion of man, and shall execute the righteous judgments of the Lord on these mothers of harlots, and fornicators of the nations.

And whereas he saith, their destruction will never be, but of themselves: I do verily believe that: For seeing their root is rottenness, their fruit must needs be destruction. Yea, the Lord will raise up his word in the midst of them, to destroy them: For the more the word of the Lord shall blow upon the university the more shall this grass wither, and the flower thereof, that is, human

learning, fade away, till it be at last quite dried up. And this is the university, whose day is coming, when iniquity shall have an end.

And thus have I done with these things: There were many other things in that sermon, as contrary to the gospel, which, for brevity's sake, I have omitted.

Now, what a sad thing is it, that such poisonous doctrine should be poured forth into a university congregation, and that, by the ministry of such a man? And if the ceremonies of the law were in use under the gospel, how ought we to rend our garments at the hearing of these things?

The *conclusion*. And now, O blessed Lord Jesus, who wast crucified, dead, and buried, but yet art risen from the dead by the eternal Spirit, and art ascended on high to fill all things, have mercy on thy poor church, which is so grievously rent and torn this day, by wolves in sheep's clothing; and is thus hurt and consumed by poisonous doctrines of men, who seek themselves, and their own things, to the harm and ruin of thy poor people! O thou Son of the living God, who art the way, the truth, and the life, how shall the kingdom of antichrist be brought down, when the hands of such men, who seem pillars in the church, are stretched forth so strongly to hold it up? And how shall the days of antichrist be shortened, when his kingdom is coming forth again, in the greatest deceivableness of unrighteousness, that hath ever yet appeared in the world to delude the nations? O Lord, remember all thy promises, and make haste to destroy Babylon the great, with all its mysteries of righteousness and unrighteousness, and let it sink as a millstone in the sea, without any hope or possibility of a resurrection. And seeing there is no hand of man stretched out for this work, but all hands are against it; do thou destroy it, O Lord, without hand, even with the Spirit of thy mouth, and the brightness of thy coming, accord-

ing to the truth of thy promises, and the unutterable sighs and groans of thy Spirit, occasioned thereby, in the hearts of all thy faithful and elect. Even so, Lord, *And let thy kingdom come, and make no long tarrying.* Amen.

Testimony from the Word against Divinity-Degrees in the University, or any Academical Degrees made use of for the Ministry of the Gospel.

THE universities, whose very soul and life do lie in human learning and school divinity, that they might gain the greater profit to themselves, and glory to their children, have, after the example of the heathen, given their children degrees in divinity, as they in arts, and the glorious titles of BATCHELORS, MASTERS, and DOCTORS in divinity, as so many crowns of gold upon their heads, to win them honour and reputation with all people who have been under the delusion of antichrist.

And in the confirming of these graduations or degrees, which also is done for a sum of money, they give the graduates license and power to preach, and to expound the scriptures, and that by the sole authority of the university.

For the VICE-CHANCELLOR, admitting a batchelor in divinity to his degree, useth these words in the name of the university, "We admit you to declare all the apos-"tolical epistles, in the name of the Father, Son, and "Holy Ghost. And so the batchelor in divinity hath "power, acccording to his degree, only to deal with the "apostolical epistles, but must go no farther." And admitting a doctor to his degree, the vice-chancellor saith thus, "We admit you to interpret and profess all the

"holy scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*."

And thus doth the university, through power received from antichrist, give men, chiefly for money, divinity degrees; and through those degrees, it gives authority and privilege to batchelors in divinity to expound part of the scriptures, and to doctors to expound and profess all the scriptures; and they that gain these degrees to themselves, are (as there is good reason) the great men in account with the university, and also with the carnal people of antichrist, how destitute soever they be of the faith and Spirit of the gospel.

Wherefore I cannot choose, but give in my testimony against this glorious and gainful privilege of the universities, to wit, their conferring upon their children degrees in divinity, and creating them masters in that mystery which none can teach but God himself; and which none can learn but true believers, who are born of God, and are his true disciples.

And so I do openly affirm, that degrees in divinity, for I meddle with none else, given by the universities to their children, are plainly and grossly antichristian, being most manifestly contrary to the word of the gospel, and the light that shines in the New Testament.

For first, In the gospel of God our Saviour, we learn, that only a new and heavenly birth, makes men to be of the true church; and that the pouring forth of the Spirit on these children of God, according to the measure of the gift of God, makes christians of several degrees in this church, and not academical graduations.

* Procancellarius bacchalaureum theologiæ admittens, his verbis utitur; admittimus te ad enarrandum omnes apostolicas epistolas in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Doctorem admittens ita dicit, admittimus te ad interpretandum universam sacram scripturam, tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, in nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti. *Cap.* 20. De ceremoniis in gradibus conferendis.

Secondly, In this gospel also we are taught, that all the true ministers of Christ are equal, and not one superior to another, as these degrees make them.

Thirdly, In this gospel also we are taught, that the true greatness amongst Christ's true disciples, doth not stand in academical degrees, or worldly honour and dignities, but in the faithful's near and exact following of Christ, in word and conversation; and that the sons of *Zebedee*, in desiring superiority and pre-eminence above the other disciples, contrary to the life and doctrine of Christ, did grievously offend, and were therefore sharply rebuked of Christ.

Fourthly, Yea here, we hear Christ himself forbidding this very thing to his disciples, that antichrist and his prophets might have no cloak for doing the contrary, where his gospel is truly taught and published. For *Matt.* xxiii. Christ doth forbid his disciples, before all the multitude, to be as the Jewish rabbies or doctors, *who*, saith Christ, *do their works to be seen of men;* and disguise themselves with different garments or habits from others, that they might be the more taken notice of, and have the more respect; *and do love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men doctor, doctor;* but, saith Christ to his disciples, *Be not ye called doctors; for one is your master, even Christ, and ye are all brethren*, and so equal.

Whence it is evident, that this practice of universities and colleges, in giving men degrees in divinity, as they call it, and titles, habits, and dignities accordingly, is contrary to the express command of Jesus Christ; and so is a mere invention of antichrist, to put honour and reputation on his ministers.

It is also manifest, that this practice of the universities, hath all along made many doctors in the church, which yet never were Christ's true disciples.

It is also manifest, that these degrees and titles do cause men to be proud, and to lift themselves up above their brethren, and to think themselves something, when they are nothing; such graduates usually proving *theologi gloriæ*, divines of glory; and not *theologi crucis*, divines of the cross, as *Luther* speaks; that is, proud and haughty clerks, and not the humble ministers of Christ crucified.

These degrees also do break the simplicity of the people of God, and do prejudice the communion of saints.

Farther, these degrees are a dangerous snare to simple people; causing them to receive all for good doctrine that is delivered by such men, though it be never so erroneous and unsound; inasmuch as their high titles, which they have gotten in these high places, and the reputation of their learning, strikes an awe into them, that they dare not once question what such men deliver, much less contradict it.

Wherefore, as much of the mystery of iniquity is discovered and dissolved already, so there is no doubt, but that this glorious relic thereof, to wit, divinity-degrees, will also, in due time, follow, as the lightenings of God shall enlighten the world.

And seeing so much of the light of the gospel hath shined forth in this age, it were to be wished that the universities, heads of colleges and clergy, would not wilfully, for worldly honour, respects, and advantage sake, shut their eyes against it, or rather with open eyes, maliciously seek to extinguish it; but that they would be contented, to have all their honour lie in their likeness to Christ, who was in the church as one that served; and who was so far from receiving honour, and taking titles from men, to make himself thereby of account in the world, that being *Lord of all, he made himself of no reputation;* and that they would reject all the pomp and pride of the false church, which, being destitute of faith

and the Spirit, makes itself and its ministers glorious in outward names and titles.

Now, though this be a plain case in the gospel, and there needs no testimony of men; yet for the fuller conviction of the world, I shall add the witness of other believers, that it may appear, that I am not alone in this matter; though to have been alone with the word, would have been sure and safe enough.

In *Edward* the third's time, there was an excellent discourse set forth, called The Ploughman's Complaint, &c. which testifieth against these divinity degrees, in these words, "Antichrist, saith it, maketh masters too many, who teach the people with their own teaching, and leave God's teaching, which is needful, and hide it, with quaint glosses, from the mean people But, saith he, these glossers object, that they desire not the state of mastery, to be worshipped thereby, but the more to profit the people when they preach the word. For they say, the people will more believe the preaching of a master, that hath taken a state of school, than the preaching of another man that hath not taken the state of mastership. To which he replies, That it is no need that masters bear witness to God's teaching or word, that it is true and good; neither, saith he, can any man, by his state of mastership which God hath forbidden, draw any man from his sin, rather than another man who is not a master, nor will be none, because it is forbidden him in the gospel. And a little after, he saith; Seeing we are to believe a man's works more than his word, the deed sheweth well of these masters, that they desire mastership, rather for their own worship, than for profit of the people," &c.

Afterwards, *John Wickliff*, that chosen servant of Christ, did witness against these antichristian degrees, who saith, "The clergy do busily seek their own worldly "worship, and glory, and by great gifts and vain costs,

" to be called masters in divinity; and to speak before " lords, and to sit at the meat with them; and not to teach " truly the gospel to all manner of men, by meek life, " and freely, as Christ bids."

The same *Wickliff*, on *Matt.* xxiii. 4. saith, "Al- " though in some studies, the name of doctor imports ex- " cellency, seeing it is a heathenish rite, heaped together " of many honours and states, yet in the text of the " apostle, it is taken more plainly for any faithful man, " who doth notably teach the catholic faith: And so the " name doctor, speaks desert and labour, and takes " away pride and eminency of state, according to this " world*"

Again, saith he, " Every sect, state, and operation, " which Christ doth not approve in his gospel, is, in " reason, to be rejected; and therefore seeing Christ " doth not approve, but reprove the forenamed heathen- " ish mastership, it is manifest that it is to be discharged, " and cast out of the church†."

Again, saith he, " Note, that the name of an office, " doth much differ from the name of a scholastical gradu- " ation, heathenishly brought in‡."

He saith also, " That Christ hath specially forbidden " his disciples, heathenish or scholastical mastership; " and that Christ would have the name of master or doc- " tor, singularly reserved to himself; seeing he, by rea-

* Licet in quibusdam studiis nomen doctoris sit excellentius, cum sit ritus gentilis ex multis honoribus & statibus aggregatus, tamen in textu apostoli sumitur simplicius, pro quocunque fideli, qui notabiliter docet fidem catholicam; & sic dicet nomen doctoris meritum & alborem, & interimit superbiam & status eminentian quoad mundum. *Wickliff Tractat. in cap.* 23. *Matt.*

† Breviter, omnis secta, status vel operatio, quam Christus non approbat in suo evangelio, est rationabiliter dimittenda; ideo cum Christus non approbat sed reprobat gentile magisterium supradictum, patet quod est de ecclesia dimittendum. *Idem.*

‡ Nota quod nomen officii multum distat a nomine graduationis scholasticæ, gentiliter introductæ. *Wickliff, in sermon. Domini in monte.*

" son of his hypostatical union, hath a certain excellen-
" cy, which cannot agree to any other of mankind :" And concludes, " That seeing there is danger in attributing " to men the title of master or doctor in divinity, there-
" fore in good reason, those titles are to be shunned in " the church of God*."

John Hus also saith, " That they who take to them-
" selves academical degrees, and titles answerable, do " go in the apparel and harness of the mystical body of " antichrist, who is the king of all the children of pride, " to wit, of the masters and doctors in divinity†."

Again, in another place he speaks to this purpose; " Christ, saith he, saith, *John* viii. *Neither came I of* " *myself, but the Father sent me;* so the saints have " come in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the name " of Jesus they have performed their priesthood, and he " is the crown of their glory." " And by this, they are " distinguished from certain, who are otherwise crowned " as masters, and doctors, and batchelors; and from " others of other kind of titles, according to the manifold " wisdom of this world; for these excelling others by " their pains, and through their own science and learning, " are notably beautified with their own titles and crowns, " and therefore do rather perform their office in their " own name, than in Christ's‡." Thus he.

Luther speaks much to this purpose also; but I shall have occasion to use him more largely.

Zuinglius on that scripture, *Matt.* xxiii. *Be ye not called doctor, for one is your master, Christ, &c.* saith thus, " Thou hearest here, that these titles of masters

* Cum periculum & superfluitas sit in isto nomine, videtur quod istud nomen sit rationabiliter fugiendum. *Wickliff.*

† *John Hus. Lib. de regno, &c. antichristi. c.* 14.

‡ Ac per hoc distinguuntur a quibusdam aliunde coronatis, ut magistri & doctores, & baccalaurei, nec non aliis varii generis titulorum, in multiplici scientia hujus mundi, &c.

" and doctors, are not of God, seeing Christ forbids " them*."

Conradus Pellican also, a godly preacher, having the sense of this on his death-bed, desired his friends, that he might by no means be buried, as the manner then was, in the habit of a doctor, *quia perabat se sresurrecturum ad judicium non ut doctorem, sed ut humilem christianum;* " because he hoped he should rise to judgment, not as a " doctor, but as an humble christian†."

Now methinks, the clear and pricious word of Christ alone, should take off the universities and clergy from giving and receiving these degrees and titles, if they do in good earnest profess themselves to be his disciples; but how much ought they to be ashamed and confounded, when they see other believers, for the love of Christ and his word, utterly renouncing these things before their faces, that they, if they persist, may be left wholly without excuse before Christ and his church!

And now, for the conclusion of this matter, I shall hold forth to the universities, the true degrees which Christ, the Son of God, did himself take in the church of God, and which all his saints are to take, after his example.

Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, the first and chief teacher of the New Testament, did neither commence batchelor nor doctor in divinity, but he took five other degrees, wherein the university graduates are usually wanting.

Christ's first degree in the church was this, that he was the Son of God; as the Lord said to him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And again, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* And this is the first degree that Christ himself took in the church,

* Audis hic hujusmodi titulos magistrorum & doctorum non ex Deo esse, quum Christus hoc vetat. *Zuingl.*

† *Conradus Pellicani. Melch. Adam. in vita Pellicani.*

his divine Sonship, according to his human nature. And this degree, all the faithful take with him, for they all are begotten of God, and born of the immortal seed of his word; and their being the *children of God through faith,* is the first degree also that they take in the church.

2. Christ's second degree in the church, was his unction with the Spirit; for being the Son of God, the Spirit of God came and *sat upon him in the form of a dove,* which was his New Testament baptism; and his first degree was confirmed to him by the Father, when he took this second; for whilst the Spirit rested on him, a voice from heaven said, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

And this second degree also, all the faithful take with Christ; for they all, as his fellows, are anointed together with him, the chief among them; they, as members, are anointed together with him, the head, with the same oil of gladness; and being sons, God sends the Spirit of his Son into their hearts; and the Spirit of the Son in their hearts is a sure testimony they are sons: and their second degree also confirms their first; to wit, the gift of the Spirit, their sonship.

3. Christ's third degree was this; that after he was anointed by the Spirit, and declared to be the Son of God, then, for the proof of both, *He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, forty days and nights together;* and in all these temptations, through his sonship and unction, he overcame the devil, and came away conqueror: And this was his third degree in the church of God, that the anointed Son of God overcame the devil, in all the greatest, and most grievous temptations, he could assault him withal.

And this third degree also, all the faithful take with Christ; for when they are the anointed Sons of God, Satan sets upon them, with all sorts of temptations, and

they are *led by the Spirit of God, to wrestle with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness set in high places, and the rulers of the darkness of this world;* and yet they, in the strength of their sonship and unction with Christ, do also with him, *tread Satan under their feet,* and go away conquerors through the grace of God in them; and this also is their third degree in the true church.

4. Christ's fourth degree in the church was this; that after his sonship, unction, and victory over the devil in all temptations, he then went forth as a fit and able minister, to teach the gospel of the kingdom, against all the enmity and opposition of the world, devil, and false church, as it is taught us, *Matt.* iv. 11,—17.

And this fourth degree also, all the truly faithful take with Christ. For, after they, through faith, are the sons of God, and through their sonship, are anointed, and through their unction, overcome the devil in all his temptations, then also they preach the gospel of the kingdom, being all of them *a chosen generation, and royal priesthood, to shew forth the virtues of him that hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light,* as *Peter* testifies: And they all speak as they do believe, and have experience; and their sonship, unction, and victory over temptation, is as sufficient a ground for them to teach, as it was for Christ to teach; and so they, without any regard of the laws of antichrist, or orders of the clergy, *go forth to teach the everlasting gospel,* as Christ did before them; and this is the fourth degree of Christ and the faithful in the church.

5. Christ's fifth and last degree, which he took in the church was this; that he, having both preached and lived the word, whereat the world and worldly church were wholly offended, and inraged; did, at the last, willingly confirm his doctrine with his death, and did seal to the truth of it with his blood; exposing himself to the most

shameful and ignominious death of the cross, to confirm his gospel to his church; and this was the highest and most glorious degree that Christ took in his church, as he testifies, when speaking of his sufferings, saying, *Now is the hour come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

And this fifth degree also, all the truly faithful do take with Christ, either in deed, if need require, or in preparation and readiness of mind, and that whilst they live in outward peace. All the blessed martyrs have taken this highest degree in the church with Christ; and all the rest of his seed have been, and are ready to take it also, when it is the good will of their heavenly Father; seeing they can say, in the same faith and spirit with Christ, even in this matter, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will, but thy will be done:* For they also are come to do the will of him that sent them, even to the laying down their lives.

Now these are the only degrees that Christ himself took in the church, and which all the saints take with him; and the true spiritual church of believers allows and approves no other degrees but these.

And what now are the university degrees in divinity to these; they are degrees in antichrist's church only; and every heathen or human creature, Turk or Infidel, may take them as well as they, with a little time and pains, and money.

Wherefore, that I may turn my speech a little to the university, "Do thou, university, if thy day and time of visitation be not already past, lay this to heart, how much thou hast departed from the gospel of Christ in this matter, as well as in all the rest; and hast received the doctrine, and laws, and methods, and manners of antichrist, wherewith thou hast deceived thyself as well as the nations. And thou, university, hast, like thy own mother Babylon, MYSTERY written on thy forehead; for thou hast taken to thyself this glorious title, *ALMA*

MATER, the BEAUTIFUL MOTHER, which only belongs to Jerusalem from above: And though thou hast brought forth a company of prodigious children, heathenish, foolish, vain, vile and abominable, yet hast thou called them learned, and given them degrees in divinity, contrary to the degrees in the gospel; and hast sent them forth into every city, country, town, and village, as ministers of Christ, yea as sons of the morning, though yet very unbelievers, and altogether destitute, of the Spirit: And thus hast thou deceived the nations, and given them a false ministry instead of a true; and by this false ministry, a false word, instead of the gospel; and the world hath not, at any time, received a greater wo, nor more grievous plague, than from thee: Wherefore, thus saith the word of the Lord, *The day of thy vengeance is coming, and the years wherein thou shalt be made desolate; and thy dainty and goodly things shall depart from thee: and thou shalt find them no more at all; and the voice of musicians and pipers shall no more be heard in thee; for in thee is found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.* Thy human learning, to wit, thy philosophy and school-divinity, and the false ministry that they have set up, and the false christians that have proceeded from that ministry, have devised and executed all these murders and massacres on the true saints of God."

Quis est sapiens & intelliget hæc?

THE

Testimony of Martin Luther

Upon the whole matter, to wit,

Touching Universities, Human Learning, or Philosophy, University-Degrees, &c.

MARTIN LUTHER, in his answer to *Ambrosius Catharinus,* expounding the vision concerning antichrist, *Dan.* viii. speaks thus:

"The twelfth and last face of antichrist, is that chaos, and open gate of hell, yet very comely to behold, to wit, the universities; into which, perjury, and the abuse of God's name, are the entrance; and the progress is a free and most licentious conversation, in all manner of wickedness. And yet, under these sins and destructions, science and sapience are promised; yea, titles and degrees are given instead of rewards.

But what do they perform at length? First, the more choice youth of Christian people are here prostituted, and are cast into the open throat of hell; that I verily think, this destruction was figured by the idol *Moloch,* to whom antiently they made their choice children to pass through the fire. Afterwards, *Aristotle* being read to them, and not rightly understood, the wits of christian youth are exercised with heathenish and human learning, yea, are quite blinded and oppressed with it. And instead of the word of God, the doctrine of antichrist is delivered; that it may seem, the devil himself could not bring forth a more subtil and effectual invention and engine, utterly to extinguish the gospel, than to set up universities. Wherein, under the pretence of christian doctrine, nothing

should be taught, but that which is most contrary to the christian faith. And if, at any time, it seem good, to call forth the choicest to the government of the churches, they call them out of the stews and dens.

And truly to me, this last face of antichrist seems to be the most hurtful of all, because this hath the pretence of the word, when all the rest have only the colour of example; and this is plainly *schola hidoth*, the school of propositions, of which anon. For it is incomparably the greatest prejudice, under the colour of the word, to teach things contrary to the word; seeing the face of examples is formed and strengthened by the face of the word, which otherwise would soon come to nothing, if the word should reign in its genuine sense; and also, seeing the pretence of examples doth only deceive the manners; but the pretence of the word, overthrows the word. But if, by any grace of God, the universities should receive the word, to wit, instead of philosophy and school divinity, how soon would the papacy, with all its faces or appearances, perish? Seeing this face, to wit, the university, is the prop, bones, and whole strength of that kingdom of faces."

VERSE 1.

This deceitful face seems to be foretold, *Rev.* ix*. which scripture, it is worth while to rehearse, and a little to unfold. For *John* saith, *The first angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit, &c.* I will here make trial a little, saith he, with my own apprehension. Now, certain it is, that by angels, through all the apocalypse, is meant the overseers of churches, as doth plainly appear out of the second and third chapters, where it is written, "To the angel of Ephesus, Smyrna, and others." Further, that other sort of angels which sound

* *Rev.* ix. from the first to the twelfth verse, expounded by *Luther*.

the trumpet, of which there are seven mentioned, *chap.* viii. cannot agree to any but the Roman bishop, seeing no others are said to sound with trumpet. Now to sound with trumpet, can be nothing else, as appears by the consequence of the text, and the following effects, than to make decrees, which none ever arrogated to himself, besides the bishop of the Roman church. Neither is it said in vain, that they prepared themselves to sound; seeing, chiefly in these popes, there hath been an impatient fury, and unquiet tyranny, to make laws, and thereby to subject others to themselves.

But let us come to our first angel, who was the first among three, who were to bring three woes upon the earth; and this is he, who did first institute and confirm universities, whom it is not easy for me to name, histories so varying in this matter. But let him be whosoever he was, he was a star fallen from heaven to earth: whether it were *Alexander* of *Hales*, or, which I rather think, St *Thomas*, who only (after the universities were approved, and this angel had sounded) was either the first, or chief author of bringing in philosophy into the christian world, being the most Aristotelian, yea plainly *Aristotle* himself; to whom, as to the earth, he fell from Christ the heaven, having obtained the authority of that most wicked angel, approving such studies.

VERSE 2.

And he received the key of the bottomless pit, and opened it, and brought forth to us philosophy, long ago dead and damned by the doctrine of the apostles: and from thence ascended the smoke of that pit, that is, the mere words and opinions of *Aristotle* and the philosophers, as the smoke of that great furnace: for then philosophy prevailed, and became of large extent and power, so that *Aristotle* was made equal with Christ, in respect of authority and faith. And hereby was the sun darkened (even Christ, the sun of righteousness and truth; moral virtues

being brought in, instead of faith, and infinite opinions instead of truth,) and the air also, with the smoke of the pit; that it may be understood, not to be an eclipse of the sun, but the obscurity of the air and sun, by the smoke of the pit ascending, to wit, human doctrines, obscuring Christ and his faith, as the sun and air.

VERSE 3.

And out of the smoke of the pit, there came forth locusts on the earth. Here the people of the universities, bred and born of philosophy, are called locusts, by a most fit name; because they are without a king, that is, Christ; and fly in companies, as is said, *Prov.* iii. and also because they waste and burn up all green things wherever they light; and so the grammarians think they have their name *locustæ*, locusts, *a loco usto & vastato*, from the place which they burn and waste. And so, this people of the universities, consumes and burns up all the green pasture of Christ, that is the fruit of faith.

And power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power; to wit, to wound the conscience of men, because the green fruit of faith being wasted, which heals the consciences of men, it cannot be, but the conscience must be hurt and prejudiced.

VERSE 4.

And it was commanded them, that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing; that is, that they should not hurt the elect. For they do not hurt all, neither do the natural locusts hurt every green thing, but some certain place: so it is here.

But only those men who have not the mark or seal of God in their foreheads; that is, some grass they should hurt, to wit, those who have not faith, which is the mark of God, which we carry in a pure conscience, and free conversation.

And it was commanded them, that they should not kill

them, but only should torment them five months. This seems to be spoken of moral doctrine, which, seeing it teaches us the knowledge of sin, like the law of God, it doth not kill, but only afflict a man with vain studies, wherein he is always learning, and yet never comes to the knowledge of the truth: For they who are killed with the letter, are quickened with the eternal Spirit, they are not tormented five months, that is, the whole time of their sensual life, in which moral divines reign. And we see by experience, that all moral virtues are of a most evil and unhappy conscience, full of scruples and unquietness, and have power, neither of good nor evil: and therefore it follows;

And their torment is, as the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man. Behold here a wounded conscience: for here he expounds what he had said before, that they are not savingly killed, nor spiritually quickened.

VERSE 6.

And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them: To wit, the death of sin, which doth too much live in the conscience, and yet is not rightly known; for if it were known, presently, it being slain, would perish: But this cannot *Aristotle's* ethics do, but it is the office of the letter, and the Spirit.

VERSE 7.

And the shapes of the locusts were like to horses prepared to battle, to wit, of scholastical disputation and conflict. He describes the war by this allegory; for they are ready to argue *pro & contra,* as they speak. *And on their heads were, as it were, crowns of gold:* that is, the names and titles of degrees, as, *magister noster eximius: sacræ theologiæ humilis & indignus professor, &c.* that is, "our famous master: and the humble and unworthy professor of sacred theology." and the like. And these crowned ones,

John Hus called *hypocritas coronatos*, crowned hypocrites: and by reason of these crowns, they have authority and power among the multitudes of carnal christians, who are willing to entertain antichrist's pomp into antichrist's church. Yet have they not true crowns, but as it were crowns of gold, which yet they are very proud of, and are much puffed up with them, though usually they are set on the head of ignorance and error*.

VERSE 8.

And their faces are like the faces of men, because their doctrine and life is governed, not by the Spirit of faith, but by the dictate of natural reason, and by the light of nature, illuminated by *Aristotle*.

And they had hair like the hair of women. For philosophy brings forth effeminate ministers, given to ease and luxury; and in whom is nothing of spirit, nor of manly abilities in Christ. For the hairs are priests, as you may see, *Psalm* lxviii. *Isaiah* iii. and in other places.

And their teeth are like the teeth of lions: Consider only the Thomists instead of all other divines, whether they be not biting, slanderous, and devourers of all that speak a word against *Aristotle's* divinity. Yea, the Thomists, Scotists, and modern men, bite one another among themselves, and sharpen against one another, not common teeth, but the teeth of lions; neither is there any sort of men which war more fiercely, or with greater hatred, than those sects of divines; each of which desires to devour the other, that it may reign alone.

* Præparatis in prælium, & armatis omni genere doctrinæ, & arte loquendi, arguendi, respondendi exhortandi: potentes sunt ad invadendum & defendendum quamcunque velint veritatem, aut speciem veritatis, armati nihil ominus omni apparentia facetiæ & honestatis. *J. Hus.*

Et super capita eorum coronæ: *id est*, Tituli magistrales, vel digitatum & graduum in ecclesia, investitura. *J. Hus.*

VERSE 9.

And they have breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and this is the pertinacious and confident presumption of each sect, on the truth and soundness of his opinion: and by these iron breast-plates they are unconquerable: and these are the principles of each sect.

And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, and of many horses running to battle: the wings are the words of those that dispute and conflict, by which they do impetuously, brawlingly and clamourously, rush on one another, and fight: as we see in the tumults of disputants, both by words and writings, where neither yields to neither, but each one is unconquerable. For he signifies this pertinacious affection of disputing, by the rushing of chariots and horsemen.

VERSE 10.

And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, and their power was to hurt men five months. Here he explains what before he had propounded, to wit, that the fruit and end of this divinity, is nothing but evil consciences, during all the time of the sensual lives of men. For that divinity is an abomination to those who are spiritual, because these are without the bounds of the five months, in the spirit of liberty.

VERSE 11.

And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon. Here we may learn, that the Rector general of all universities, is not Christ, nor the holy Spirit, nor any angel of God, but an angel of the bottomless pit; that is, one that is dead, and is among the dead and damned. Who is it then? even that light of nature, to wit, *Aristotle*, who doth truly reign in the universities, as Abaddon, and Apollyon, that is, "a was-

ter and destroyer of the church." For we have said, that an angel signifies a teacher or a doctor in the church. And certain it is, that *Aristotle*, who is dead and damned, is at this day, the great doctor of the universities, rather than Christ; for he reigns alone, being exalted by the authority and study of *Thomas*, reviving free-will, and teaching moral virtues, and natural philosophy, to wit, the three-headed Cerberus, or three bodied Gerion.

Behold the first wo which the church hath from the Romish antichrist, by the ministry of saint *Thomas;* and they whose duty it was, chiefly to have prohibited and extinguished these things, they chiefly have erected and established them.

Thus *Luther*, word for word, in the forenamed place. He also, in his book *de abroganda missa privata*, speaking of the idol *Moloch*, saith thus:

Moses and *Jeremy* have described the worship of this idol, to be after this manner, that they did burn, or offer to him their children in the fire, supposing that hereby they did perform the greatest and highest service to God; inasmuch as, after the example of *Abraham*, they do not spare their own children; though they do this, not only not being called as *Abraham* was, but also without faith, and in the highest wickedness; and therefore the Psalmist testifies, *Psalm* lxxviii. That *they offered not their children to God, but to devils.* For whatsoever is not done by the call and command of God, is not done to God, but to devils, who suggest this, though it be done under pretence of the name of God.

Now hereby, saith he, I conceive the universities to be represented, in which, the best and choicest part of christian youth is offered, as it were in burnt-sacrifice to God, that there they may be instructed, and be made, as it were, wholly divine. For the common people believe there is no place under heaven, in which youth can be

better instructed, so that even religious people have recourse hither. For to learn any thing out of the university, is to learn nothing: but to have studied in the university, is to know all things. There all divine and human things are believed to be taught: for no man sends his son hither, with any other opinion than this, that he can no where be better sent. They think they perform the highest service to God, that they offer their sons to be formed according to the instruction of godliness, that thereby they may become profitable and useful ministers, preachers, governors, who may wholly become God's own portion, and be useful, both to God and men.

And hereto appertains the name Moloch, which signifies a king, or kingly, because this kind of study doth honour them with degrees and promotions, and renders them fit and able to govern others. For we see, that all that are preferred to governments, are taken out of universities: and he that is not a graduate, or member of an university, is not qualified for preferment, or to be set over any people: but let the ass first be crowned, to wit, with a degree, and then let him reign.

And parents do not see, and they that do see, do not regard, that youth are usually here destroyed, through rude and vile manners, none commonly forbidding them. Yea, fornication, luxury, and other manifest sins, do but mildly destroy them: but that they are indued and possessed with philosophical, heathenish, human, wicked, and impious opinions; this is the fire of Moloch, which no tears can sufficiently bewail; seeing through this they especially are devoured and perish, who are the most studious and modest youth in universities. So great is the fury of God upon this valley of *Tophet* and *Hinnom*, that they perish more grievously who learn most, and live modestly, than they who learn nothing, and are corrupted with lusts. For these learn nothing which is to be

unlearned again, seeing they know they do evil; whereas the other suck in poison, which happily, or never, they do vomit up again, holding that for good, which is evil, and instructing those with the like opinions, whom they take to teach.

And to these pits of hell it is to be imputed, that the sun of the gospel is obscured with the smoke of the pit: for out of this smoke proceed those locusts, which possess all chairs, and pulpits, and administer all governments; that Satan, from the beginning of the world, could devise nothing in all the world, more strong and pernicious to waste faith and the gospel, than universities. Neither was it meet that this evil should arise, but in the end of the world, when the world, through the prevailing of sin, being loaden with the wrath of God, should draw near to hell and damnation. For the miserable people must needs hear those things taught, and delivered out of the pulpits, which those Molochites have learned in the universities. And they have learned nothing but the highest blasphemies of God. Neither is it lawful to have any where, any other pastor than these*.

In *Jeremiah*, that valley is called *Gehinnom*, from whence Christ took that word Gehenna, which, what it signifies, I do not well know: but it seems to me to come from Janah, which signifies to eat up, or to pill, or waste; as tyrants or usurers, do pill and suck out the people: so that Gehinnom is the valley of pilling or wasting the people. For these being set over the people as shepherds, ought to feed them with the word of life; and they, instead thereof, do insensibly waste and devour them, in their body, goods, and soul, with the pestilent doctrines of universities. And such teachers do the universities, those synagogues of perdition, give us. Thus *Luther*.

* Ut academiis, ab initio mundi, Satanas nihil excogitaret presentius, ad vastandum fidem & evangelium, toto orbe.

These now are *Luther's* own words, which I have made legible to *Englishmen.* Wherein it is manifest that he condemns the universities in the very institution and constitution of them, and chiefly in their chief studies, human learning, and school-divinity; and also, as to that gross popish opinion, that they are the fountain and nurseries of the ministry: and that none are fit to teach, or so fit to teach, as those that have been educated in them. Yea, though these be raw, foolish, ignorant fellows, yet being university graduates, must they be set over towns, and parishes; and the miserable people must not only hear them and their doltish doctrine, brought from the universities, but also must be constrained, by secular power and laws, to pay them well for such pains, which tends only to the ruin of their souls for ever: And no hand is yet strongly and resolutely stretched out, to deliver the people from this intolerable bondage. For the necks of the people of the world have never endured so grievous a yoke from any tyrants, as from the doctrine and domination of the clergy. For worldly tyrants have only afflicted mens bodies and temporal estates, which reacheth but to this short life: But these spiritual tyrants, the clergy or false ministry, when they have got countenance, strength, and aid from the worldly magistrates, how have they, with their academical, philosophical, heathenish divinity, infected, poisoned, and destroyed the people to eternal death, and nobody durst shun them; upon pain of temporal death, or punishments! But now, through the great goodness of God, and his mighty providences and works from heaven, it is a more happy age; and happy shall they be, who, being called forth, shall do the work of God against all discouragements and difficulties, and shall not, with *Ephraim*, being harnessed, turn their backs in the day of battle.

And now, to return to our business again, touching the

universities, let none object that *Luther* speaks against popish universities only; for this is but a weak and simple defence, and altogether unable to ward off the mighty blow of God's word from their heads and hearts. For the things condemned in the foregoing testimonies of *Luther*, are the self same, for the substance of them, as do live, prevail, and flourish in our present universities, as hath been before declared; and I leave it to every faithful christian to judge the truth in this matter. But men would fain preserve their titles, degrees, authority, dignity, state, stipends, and therefore, for the defence of these things, they must needs say something, though it be to never so little purpose: But yet, by such discourse, they sufficiently declare how cool and icy they are for Christ's interest, and how zealous for their own.

But certain it is, that as the universities were set up at first, as nurseries for antichrist's kingdom, men being therein so educated, according to the undertaking of *Charles* the great, in philosophy and school-divinity, that it might be said to them, *vos estis sal terræ, et lux mundi*, "Ye are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world," (which yet only agrees to the faithful, who are born of God:) so have they still remained the same hitherto in substance, though not without some small change of outward form.

2. For first, the philosophy taught and studied in the university, is the very same that it was at first; and this philosophy is nothing but the religion of the heathen. For what the law was to the Jews, and the gospel is to the christians, philosophy was, and is to the heathen; and in this study, the poor lads waste the flower and cream of their lives to no purpose, but to make them more heathenish, corrupt, and bold in evil, than they were by nature. And,

For their divinity, which they usually learn in the universities, out of the fathers, schoolmen, and systems;

and in which they are trained up, to dispute either for it, or against it, in the schools (it being in seriousness, all one to them, what they hold and maintain in religion, seeing all is but opinion to them ;) and which they after teach to the people, with special regard to their own profit and advantage, this is not the true word, and ministry of the gospel. For the gospel is the word of faith; which word, is the word in our hearts, according to the tenor of the new covenant, wherein God saith, *I will write my law in their hearts, and put it in their inward parts:* But now the university divines, the truth being indeed dead in their hearts, and having no presence nor power there, they take it up out of the books and writings of men, wherein it hath been buried; and by this means, bring forth a dead doctrine to the world (which other men have spoken, but themselves have no experience of) and not the word of life, which hath quickened them; but only a dead letter, raised up like the living letter, which they present to them; as the witch of *Endor* raised up a dead *Samuel,* in the outward habit and appearance of the living *Samuel,* and presented him to *Saul:* So these university divines, bring forth the outward garment and appearance of the truth to the people, when they do best; but the substance, soul, and life of the truth, they cannot bring forth; because they have not the living word of God in their hearts, but have only a dead word, which they gather out of the books and writings of men. And this is the university divinity.

And lastly, The preachers, which the universities send forth, are usually in the greatest enmity to Christ and his gospel, of all other men whatsoever, and do bring greatest prejudice to Christ's kingdom, and greatest advantage to antichrist's. For when men without learning, and yet without the Spirit of Christ, will undertake to teach the people, as many also now do, their ignorance is manifest to all, and is judged of all, and they, through

their rudeness, can never long deceive the world; but now, when men are as destitute of the Spirit as they, and yet have human learning, and the letter of the word in a philosophical sense, to help them, this is that, that exceedingly endangers and deceives the world; the people supposing the doctrine of the gospel, according to philosophical learning, to be the ministration of the Spirit, and to be sufficiently enough to instruct the church. And so antichrist's kingdom is set up with credit and renown, by these: Whereas the ignorant teachers, who are destitute of the Spirit, are able to do him no considerable service. But Christ will not have the learned men to be teachers in his church, through their learning; and as little will he have ignorant men to teach in his church, because of their ignorance; but whether men be learned or ignorant, according to the world, it is no matter in Christ's church, where each man is to speak in the Spirit of Christ, which makes both the ignorant and the learned, alike wise in Christ: And so the learned man becomes ignorant in the church, to be learned in Christ; and the ignorant man, without worldly learning, forthwith becomes wise in Christ; and the learned and the ignorant meet together, only in the wisdom of Christ, which is the wisdom of God, and swallows up at once, all the learning and ignorance of the world alike, and will have all wise alone in itself.

Wherefore, all universities being left and forsaken as to this matter, let learned and ignorant men come alike to Christ, to be made wise in him, who is made unto us of God, our only wisdom.

THE

RIGHT REFORMATION OF

LEARNING,

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES,

According to the State of the Gospel, and the true Light that shines therein.

THOUGH I do not pretend to that wisdom which might direct the world, farther than the word of God is with me, yet shall I be bold, as one who desires to be faithful to Christ, and profitable to his true church, to offer my apprehensions and advice to the called, chosen, and faithful ones of Christ, that either now are, or hereafter may be, in authority in these nations, touching the instructing youth, and ordering schools.

1. First therefore, as to this matter, I do judge, there neither is, nor can be any greater evil, than to bring up children in ease and idleness, and to suffer them to live freely and without controul, according to those natural lusts and corruptions which they bring along with them into the world, which do soon wonderfully improve, through such a careless and unnurtured life. And such children and youth usually become an early prey to the devil, who readily fills them with all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the heathen.

2. I conceive it meet, that the civil power, or chief magistrates, should take great care of the education of

youth, as of one of the greatest works that concerns them, and as one of the worthiest things they can do in the world: inasmuch as what the youth now is, the whole commonwealth will shortly be.

3. To this end, it is meet that schools, if wanting, be erected throughout the whole nation, and that not only in cities and great towns, but also, as much as may be, in all smaller villages: And that the authority of the nation take great care, that godly men especially have the charge of greater schools; and also that no women be permitted to teach little children in villages, but such as are the most sober and grave; and that the magistrate afford to this work all suitable encouragement and assistance.

4. That in such schools, they first teach them to read their native tongue, which they speak without teaching; and then presently, as they understand, bring them to read the HOLY SCRIPTURES; which, though for the present, they understand not, yet may they, through the blessing of God, come to understand them afterwards.

5. That in cities and greater towns, where are the greater schools, and the greater opportunities to send children to them, they teach them also the Latin and Greek tongues, and the Hebrew also, which is the easiest of them all, and ought to be in great account with us, for the Old Testament's sake. And it is most heedfully to be regarded, that in teaching youth the tongues, to wit, the Greek and Latin, such heathenish authors be most carefully avoided, be their language never so good, whose writings are full of the fables, vanities, filthiness, lasciviousness, idolatries, and wickedness of the heathen. Seeing usually, whilst youth do learn the language of the heathen, they also learn their wickedness in that language: whereas, it were far better for them to want their language, than to be possessed with their wickedness. And what should Christian youth have to do with the

heathenish poets, who were, for the most part, the devil's prophets, and delivered forth their writings in his spirit; and who, through the smoothness, quaintness, and sweetness of their language, do insensibly instil the poison of lust and wickedness into the hearts of youth; whereby their education, which ought to correct their natural corruption, doth exceedingly increase and inflame it?

Wherefore my counsel is, that they learn the Greek and Latin tongues especially from Christians, and so without the lies, fables, follies, vanities, whoredoms, lust, pride, revenge, &c. of the heathens; especially, seeing neither their words nor their phrases are meet for Christians to take into their mouths: and most necessary it is, that Christians should forget the names of their gods and muses, which were but devils and damned creatures, and all their mythology and fabulous inventions, and let them all go to Satan, from whence they came.

6. It may be convenient also, that there may be some universities or colleges, for the instructing youth in the knowledge of the liberal arts, beyond grammar and rhetorick; as in logic, which, as it is in divinity, as one calls it, *gladius diaboli*, the devil's sword, so in human things it may be of good use, if reason manage that art of reason: but the mathematics especially are to be had in good esteem in universities; as arithmetic, geometry, geography, and the like: which, as they carry no wickedness in them, so are they besides, very useful to human society, and the affairs of this present life.

There may be also, in these universities or colleges, allowed the studies of physic, and of the law, according to that reformation, which a wise and godly authority will cause them to pass under, both being now exceedingly corrupt and out of order, both for practice and fees.

7. But why these universities or colleges should be only at *Cambridge* and *Oxford*, I know no reason: Nay, if hu-

man learning be so necessary to the knowledge and teaching of the scriptures, as the universities pretend, they surely are without love to their brethern, who would have these studies thus confined to these places, and do swear men to read and teach them no where else: certainly it is most manifest, that these men love their own private gain, more than the common good of the people*. Seeing they say, no-body can well understand or teach the scriptures without it; and so, by reason of this their incroachment, against the rule of love, through the former grants of popes and kings, all men should be necessitated to send their children hither, from all parts of the nation, some scores or hundreds of miles, for liberal education, to the great trouble and charge of parents: especially this considered, that the universities usually have been places of great licentiousness and profaneness; whereby it often comes to pass, that parents, sending their children far from them, young and hopeful, have, for all their care and cost, after several years, received them back again, with their tongues and arts, proud, profane, wicked, abominable, and incorrigible wretches.

Wherefore doubtless it would be more suitable, and more advantageous to the good of all the people, to have universities or colleges, one at least, in every great town or city in the nation, as in *London*, *York*, *Bristol*, *Exeter*, *Norwich* and the like; and for the state to allow to these colleges, an honest and competent maintenance, for some godly and learned men to teach the tongues and arts, under a due reformation. And this the state may the better do, by provision out of every county, or otherwise, as shall be judged best, seeing then there will be no such

* Juramentum magistrorum in receptionibus & resumptionibus solennibus. Jurent etiam, quod extra istam universitatem, nusquam alibiin Anglia, præterquam Oxoniæ, in aliqua facultate incipient, aut lectiones suas solenniter resument, nec consentient quod aliquis alibi in Anglia incipiens, hic pro magistro in illa facultate habeatur.

need of endowment of scholarships; inasmuch as the people having colleges in their own cities, near their own houses, may maintain their children at home, whilst they learn in the schools; which would be indeed the greatest advantage to learning that can be thought of.

8. It should also be considered, whether it be according to the word of God, that youth should spend their time only in reading of books, whilst they are well, strong, active, and fit for business. For commonly, it so falls out, that youth lose as much by idleness, as they gain by study. And they being only brought up to read books, and such books as only contain wrangling, jangling, foolish and unprofitable philosophy, when they have continued any long time in the university, in these unwarranted courses by God, they are commonly, in the end, fit for no worthy employment, either in the world, or among the faithful.

To remedy which great evil, colleges being, as hath been spoken, dispersed through the great cities and towns of the commonwealth, it may be so ordered, that the youth (according to *Luther's* counsel*) may spend some part of the day in learning or study, and the other part of the day in some lawful calling; or one day in study, and another in business, as necessity or occasion shall require.

And thus shall youth be delivered from that ease and idleness, which fills the hearts of university students with many corruptions, and noisome lusts, whilst they fill their heads only with empty knowledge and foolish notions; whereby, neither can God be glorified, nor their neighbour profited.

9. And if this course were taken in the disposing and ordering colleges, and studies, it would come to pass that twenty would learn then, where one learns now; and

* *Luther* Libel. de instituend. pueris.

also by degrees, many men, on whom God shall please to pour forth his Spirit, may grow up to teach the people, whilst yet they live in an honest calling and employment, as the Apostles did. And this would give them great efficacy and power in teaching, whilst they lived by faith, through their honest labour, and were delivered from the mischief of idleness: But and if the faithful shall desire any one that is more apt to teach, and hath received a greater measure of the anointing than his brethren, to spend more of his time in the word and prayer than his calling will afford, at such times they ought to supply him: and the law of love in the hearts of the faithful, will be law enough in this matter, without calling in the aid of the magistrate.

And by this means, may the chargeable and burdensome maintenance of the carnal clergy, by degrees be taken away, and the church of Christ, and the very nations themselves, be supplied with a more faithful, christian, and spiritual ministry than now it hath, at a far less rate. For God hath promised, in the last days to *pour out his Spirit on all flesh, and the sons, and daughters, and servants, and handmaids, shall prophesy,* and then *shall knowledge cover the earth, as waters the seas.*

Now for conclusion: I do conceive, that none of the faithful and wise have any just cause to be offended, for speaking for the use of human learning in this reformed way, which the gospel will permit; seeing by this means, these two errors of antichrist would be dissolved among us; the one of making universities the fountains of the ministry; which one thing is, and will be more and more, (as Christ's kingdom shall rise up and prevail in the world) a mill-stone about their necks: and the other, of making the clergy a distinct sect or order, or tribe, from other Christians, contrary to the simplicity of the gospel.

2. Let the faithful consider that this reformed use of tongues and arts, justly hath its place in the world, whereby men may be improved in the use of reason, and sober learning, and may be serviceable to the commonwealth in their age, whilst the church of Christ hath its own members and officers, through the call of God, and unction of his Spirit only. For human learning hath its place and use among human things, but hath no place nor use in Christ's kingdom, as hath been sufficiently proved.

And thus have I freely offered my advice for mending things that are amiss, and making straight the things that are crooked in this matter.

FINIS.

LAUREL
BOOK SHOP
KATHERINE AND KARL GOEDECKE
33 West Third St.
HAZLETON, PENNA.